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ABSTRACT

The member countries of the Commission of European Communities carried out various programs to combat illiteracy in their countries. The activities can be grouped in six areas: (1) adaptation of teaching to overcome the learning difficulties of disadvantaged pupils; (2) reconsideration and development of the objectives of language skills at the primary level; (3) prevention of loss of skills in students; (4) initial and inservice teacher training; (5) literacy campaigns; and (6) distance learning. Community action was also initiated to teach literacy. (The majority of this document is made up of summaries of the activities of the literacy programs carried out in 12 member states: Belgium; Denmark; Spain; France; Greece; Ireland; Italy; Luxembourg; The Netherlands; Portugal; Germany; and the United Kingdom.) (KC)

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REPORT

ON THE FIGHT AGAINST

ILLITERACY

COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPÉENNES
Rue de la Loi, 200
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S U M M A R Y

		Pages
I.	BACKGROUND	3
II.	INTRODUCTION	5
III.	SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE MEMBER STATES TO COMBAT ILLITERACY	11
	A. Adaptation of teaching to overcome the learning difficulties of disadvantaged pupils	11
	B. Reconsidering and developing the objectives of language skills at primary level	14
	C. Preventing loss of skills	15
	D. Initial and in service teacher training	15
	E. Literacy campaigns	16
	F. Distance learning	17
IV.	REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ACTION	18
	A. Measures taken by the Commission to organize exchanges of information	18
	B. Taking account of the literacy problem in other Community action	20
V.	CONCLUSIONS	22
VI.	WORK PROGRAMME 1987-1988	28

I. BACKGROUND

A) It was comparatively recently - on 4 June 1984 to be exact - that the Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council under the chairmanship of Mr Alain SAVARY, French Minister for Education, for the first time devoted part of their discussions to the problem of illiteracy in the Member States of the European Communities.

The Ministers put on record their intention to attach particular importance to this problem and to ensure that the population as a whole is able to master the skills of reading and writing, essential tools both in daily life and at work.

B) The conclusions of the meeting on 4 June 1984

Conclusions on combatting illiteracy (see Annex XVII) were adopted. These conclusions were in two parts : firstly, measures which the Member States would take on their own initiative within their respective education systems to take account of the problem of illiteracy; secondly, Commission measures in support of the efforts of the Member States.

At national level, Community action, set out in the conclusions of the meeting of 4 June 1984 covers exclusively matters which are the responsibility of the Ministers of Education. We are therefore mainly concerned here with preventive measures to be taken at primary school level. It will also be possible to take preventive measures at nursery school and in the early years of secondary school.
The role which the school is called upon to play in this context goes well beyond the technical transmission of knowledge; it also encompasses an important social dimension, along the lines of greater willingness to recognize and comprehend the child's environment (parents, youth organizations, working life.)
The conclusions of the meeting on 4 June 1984 also provide for action at adult level, where this is the responsibility of the Ministries for Education (literacy campaigns, distance learning).

National measures should encompass various aspects:

The measures taken as part of educational curricula to take account of the difficulties of the pupils most at risk and to fix minimum levels of knowledge to be acquired at primary school with regard to reading, writing and communication; measures to prevent the loss of skills acquired; incorporation of the study of this problem into the basic and in-service training of teachers; the promotion of adult literacy campaigns where these campaigns are the responsibility of the Ministers for Education; the development of distance learning:

Community action is aimed at implementing :

A Community policy to combat illiteracy and support national policies in this field.

The Commission is mainly responsible for organizing information exchanges between national experts, which should make it possible to define the causes and the extent of the problem, analyse the experiments undertaken in the schools systems, and identify the measures to be taken to combat illiteracy, in particular in the primary school.

C) The report

In the conclusions the meeting held on 4 June 1986, the Ministers for Education requested the Education Committee to assess the progress made in implementing the policy for combatting illiteracy in the European Community.

This report is the Commission's contribution in response to this request. It has been drawn up in close cooperation with the national authorities dealing with illiteracy. It comprises three parts :

I. A summary of action undertaken by the Member States in combatting illiteracy. This chapter is based on the national reports set out in annexes I to XII and for which the Member States are entirely responsible.

II. Survey of Community action.

III. Prospects for 1987-1988.

In accordance with the desire expressed by the Education Committee, this report deals mainly with preventive action to be taken at primary school level. It nevertheless emerged very clearly in the course of discussions with the national officials' working party that, to be wholly effective, the measures to be taken to combat illiteracy should be part of an overall scheme, encompassing the whole range from nursery level to the end of secondary school and including action at adult level. The role which the school is called upon to play in this context goes well beyond the technical transmission of knowledge ; it also includes an important social dimension along the lines of greater willingness to recognize and comprehend the child's environment (parents, youth organizations and working life).

II. INTRODUCTION

The persistence of illiteracy in industrialized countries is surprising at first sight and seems difficult to explain since schooling has been compulsory since the late 19th/early 20th century in the Member States of the Community.

Although the precise number and proportion of illiterates in Europe is not known, all the signs are that it is a worrying social problem concerning a large number of the working population.

For example, in Belgium, 60 % of unemployed persons drawing benefit have barely completed primary education. This situation is particularly worrying since this low level of education generally goes hand in hand with a low level of training, making it very difficult to attempt any kind of retraining and restricting the choice of work - where this type of employment is available - to non-skilled and repetitive manual labour.
In Belgium and France, where tests are administered during military service, it is estimated that 5 % of recruits are illiterate. Extrapolating from this percentage, which applies only to adult male nationals of the population as a whole we arrive at a figure which is probably well below the real one.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to asses the extent of the problem at European level in more exact quantitive terms since the search for reliable statistical data poses various problems. Firstly, the target population is very difficult to reach since illiterates have a tendancy to conceal what they regard as a handicap or a personal deficiency.

The definition of illiteracy is also a problem. In the context of this report, the term does not apply to people incapable of reading or writing on account of physical or mental handicap but refers to people whose reading and writing abilities are so limited that they preclude any possibility of participating in social, private or working life. These people experience difficulties in, or are totally incapable of, for example, filling in official forms, reading public transport timetables, understanding bills, using telephone books; all of which obviously restricts their access to information, excludes them from any rewarding social function and confines them to the role of socially assisted persons. Dependent on the goodwill of others, and the object of scorn, they tended to isolate themselves so as not to admit to their shortcomings.

The definition adopted by the national officials and the Commission corresponds to the definition adopted by UNESCO in November 1978, together with that laid down in the study drafted in 1974 by the International Reading Association :

"a. literate : a person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.

b. illiterate : a person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.

c. functionally literate : a person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development.

d. functionally illiterate : a person is functionally illiterate who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development". (1)

"... literacy does not consist of a single skill or even a set of skills; literacy is two-dimensional rater than uni-dimensional. Literacy is best defined as the application of a set of skills (dim. 1) to a set of general knowledge areas (dim. 2) which result from the cultural requirements that are imposed on the members of a culture".(2)

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(1) Definition adopted by UNESCO on 27 November 1978
(2) Definition adopted by the International Reading Association (1974)

It is therefore functional illiteracy with which we are concerned here since account must be taken of the fact that in our present-day society the written word occupies a considerable place in social and working life. We are constantly confronted by messages which have to be swiftly interpreted, requiring higher skills than in the past when reading was above all a leisure pursuit.

At any rate, regardless of the (exact) number of illiterates in the Member States of the European Community, it is extremely worrying that young people leave school without having acquired basic skillsin reading and writing and that others lose these skills after having acquired them (loss of literacy skills).

It would be interesting to be able to quantify the social cost of illiteracy in our societies, in terms of manpower which can only be retrained with difficulty, in terms of unused potential, and in terms of non-assimilated information.

Schools must also recognise the important challenge offered by the new communication methods, and the fight against illiteracy must be considered within this context.

Various factors, very frequently cumulative, contribute to the development of illiteracy.

If illiteracy is a matter of concess anong adults who did not receive sufficient education, it is even more so for those who find themselves to be illiterate after 8 or 10 years of obligatory schooling education. There is a great terptation to say that it is the school that is completely responsible. To-day, if one believes the headings of certain newspapers : "Children no longer learn how to read at school". Now, the reasons for illiteracy which exists in industrial societies are much more complex than a simple"drop in the standard of education" an empty concept if one compares the number going to school to-day with those of yesterday.

Illiteracy is the product of a number mutually of reinforcing causes. Since the school constitutes only one of these elements, alone it will not solve the problem.

Among all the causes, let us mention social factors related to the child's environment (family : occupational status, social circumstances, cultural level), geographic factors (rural or ruban areas, distance between home and school), medical factors (illness leading to absenteeism, problems related to hearing and sight), psychological factors (lack of support from the child's environment with regard to learning at school).

The family thus plays quite an important role in this situation : it seems, for example, that the children of illiterate parents run a greater risk of being illiterate themselves. School has, however, a decisive role to play especially with regard to redressing, in sofar as it is possible, these different factors.

It is not the object of this report to study all these causes but to identify those on which schools can take action. We shall not analyse here the reasons for the loss of literacy skills but will concentrate rather on the factors governing failure to acquire basic skills - reading and writing - at this stage of compulsory schooling.

It should first be pointed out that although illiteracy is more apparent than twenty years'ago on account of unemployment and the problems of retraining a large number of unemployed persons on account of their lack of training and basic knowledge - a section of the population which in the sixties was absorbed by the labour market, - the situation seen from a broader historical perspective is nevertheless a positive one.

If we take into consideration the school population, its social composition is increasingly varied and the schools have a tendency to absorb, little by little, at all levels of non-higher education, all the social categories which, up to the present, were little represented. Measures intended to prolong the period of compulsory schooling have been taken in various Member States. It is, however, clear that compulsory schooling is not in itself sufficient to eliminate the problem of illiteracy. The democratizing role played by the school in this field is altogether a success in terms of access for sections of the population previously excluded, but its corollary is a general lowering of the level of scholastic performance as it is precisely this access for the masses which makes it difficult for teachers to take account of the needs of the most disadvantaged pupils since the teachers have not been prepared to receive these new arrivals (particularly as regards working in a multicultural environment) ; consequently, shrugging off the responsibility for failure mainly onto the educational level immediately below or considering a certain number of failures as inevitable, they forge ahead with the best pupils and the other children feel rejected. Pupils experiencing failure are frequently channelled into branches such as special education in which they have little chance of making any progress. The school system therefore helps to widen the gap between the elite and the most disadvantaged. It is also important to remember that schooling

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is compulsory for the individual but that schools are entitled to expel any pupil who proves to be particularly intolerable ; in this way young people find themselves on the street even though they have enrolled at an educational establishment.

The very large number of pupils in each class is not conducive to account being given to pupils' individual needs and all the less so where pupils are subjected to the pressure of syllabuses with which they are required to comply, as is the case in those Member States where education is the responsibility of centralized structures. Completing the syllabus becomes the goal to be achieved and the main objective of education which is, at least at a lower level, the transmission to all pupils of knowledge and skills essential to life in society is forgotten.

The constraints of the syllabuses means that we lose sight of the fact that there are learning stages which, in the case of reading and writing, are between five and eight years and are followed by stages in which what has been learned is consolidated.

Taking account of the individual needs of pupils also implies having a knowledge of the abilities of each one evaluating progress against the pupil's own achievement and continuous assessment of knowledge. All this assumes a flexibility in respect of time and human resources which all too frequently does not exist.

Moreover, teachers have little time at their disposal to make contact with parents and understand the underlying reasons for a low level of educational attainment. The school is consequently not able to play a compensatory role to a family environment hardly conducive to learning. Most of the children in difficulty at school do indeed suffer from a lack of family support; they come from families where little value is placed on reading and where reading is not part of the cultural landscape of the family since it does not figure in their leisure pursuits, which are seen more as an opportunity to be together than as free time for "cultural enrichment".

Television often replaces leisure time otherwise spent reading and is becoming the main source of rapid, varied and attractive information, and school has difficulty in competing.

A more pragmatic approach to teaching reading and writing in which simple and clear links with everyday life show their usefulness could then stimulate these pupils, but in most syllabus there is no provision for this kind of teaching.
A example of this is the education known in some countries as "second-chance" : it is interesting to note the attitude towards the school of pupils experiencing failure who nevertheless show an interest in learning but prefer to have recourse to institutions outside the school where teaching is integrated to a greater degree into one or other occupational project.

Other reasons not associated with the family such as absences through illness, moving house, medical problems (defective hearing or vision) are also likely to cause a pupil to fall behind and he then finds it discouraging and hard to catch up. Yet these are problems which could be detected swiftly at school.

A lack of self-confidence, difficulties in participating or concentrating are certainly also factors to be taken into consideration by the school.

Lastly, the role played by the media should also be mentioned, in particular, television, which the school should be able to match in terms of interest to the pupil; secondly, this mass of information currently accessible to everyone alters the parameters of the problem : what matters today is no longer knowing everything but processing and selecting information.

In this respect, the new information technologies are liable to have various consequences. Here we can cite the excellent OECD report on information technologies and basic learning : "Does the social context of the class risk being upset by the massive intervention of computers ? On the negative side, one may fear that the advantage which draws children from favoured environments to a precocious familiarity with the computers, thanks to the material they have at home, does not modify or strengthen the hower structures and the processes of negociation to their advantage which inside the class group, may considerably influence apprenticeships. A socially opposite phenomenon could also occur. It is not unusual to notice that children from disadvantaged areas, handicapped in traditional studies, distinguish themselves in the new field of technologies where they do as well as everybody else.
In a similar way, the power structures would be able to change to their advantage." (1)

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(1) Information technologies and basic education, p. 81 par. 170

International Conference of national representatives and experts - Paris, 13 - 15 October 1986 CERI (OECD)

III. SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE MEMBER STATES TO COMBAT ILLITERACY

This chapter follows the order of the measures falling within the competence of the Member States as described in the June 1984 conclusions, chapter A, paras 1 to 6, adopted by the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council.

It is based on the national reports in Annexes I to XII drawn up by the national officials working party under the responsibility of the Member States.

A. Adaptation of teaching to overcome the learning difficulties of disadvantaged pupils

All the Member States have taken measures at the various levels of education, either on an experimental basis or throughout the system, with a view to overcoming learning difficulties in the mother tongue.

It is interesting to note that such efforts begin at nursery school level.
A study carried out in France showed that children who had attended nursery school had a better chance of success at school than those who had not - and this was true of all classes of society. Experiments to familiarize children in nursery school was carried out in Belgium and France. They showed that pupils were interested in writing for everyday purposes (preparation of recipes, etc.); the experiments proved positive provided they did not entail premature learning of reading and writing.

In the Netherlands measures against illiteracy begin at nursery school level. The draft law described below, referring to primary schools, is equally applicable to nursery schools.

In Portugal, the Ministry of Education has adopted a policy of increasing the number of nursery schools.

Measures at primary level were taken in most Member States : in Belgium and Greece, additional teachers may be appointed to particularly large classes ; the "adjustment" teachers devote their attention to pupils with difficulties, either individually or in small groups.

In Belgium and in France, primary education has been reformed in several schools ; these reforms were aimed at a more individual approach to teaching, organizing work in groups according to pupils' skills and more parental involvement.

In France, the Ministry of Education recently disseminated a circular indicating ways to combat illiteracy. The circular emphasizes the importance of attacking the problem at source, particularly through differentiated teaching and continuous assessment of progress. Regions with particularly high failure rates were identified and received special resources, especially in the form of staff or subsidies for setting up librairies or documentation centres in schools, which were also open to parents.

In Greece, where geographical remoteness has a significant impact on school absenteeism, a draft law provides for free transport to school and free accommodation at the school itself if desired. The law provides for changes to school programmes to improve the standard of primary education and replace current books with new ones. It also provides for measures to open up the school to the outside world through the creation of local and regional school committees.

In Ireland, measures adopted by the Government include cuts in the size of classes, the organization of remedial teaching and the creation of special classes for slow learners.

In Italy, decree DPR 12/2/85 nr 104 has led to the New Teaching Programmes for primary schools being approved ; these reinforce the concept of "Initial Cultural Literacy". The implementation of these programmes will consist of a strategy aimed at avoiding dispersions in the acquisition of knowledge by encouraging the acquisition of abilities and skills necessary for a good standard of basic education. As well as this, extra teachers can be made available to help children who are socially and culturally disadvantaged (in particular, gypsies, nomads and immigrants).

Since the beginning of the 1979s, measures have been implemented in the Netherlands to combat illiteracy at school. A draft law, currently under discussion, contains measures relating to the definition of priority education areas, the cooperation of schools in these areas with non-governmental organizations and parent participation ; schools adopting such measures will benefit from the assistance of educational organizations.

In addition to this, the policy in the Netherlands is to refer as few children as possible to special schools.

In the United Kingdom, the Government has published a document entitled "Better Schools" containing official guideliness on how to improve educational standards, particularly as regards reading, writing and arithmetic. Under the 1981 Education Act it is the local authorities' task to identify children with learning difficulties and provide the schools with the means to deal with them.

All primary schools in the Federal Republic of Germany regard the teaching of reading and writing as one of their main tasks. This objective is achieved throughout the country inter alia by making the teaching of these skills compulsory, developing teaching material approoriate to the age of the children and by teaching pupils in small groups in the early years of primary school. Special schools and teachers with relevant training are available for pupils experiencing difficulties.

Apart from the measures described above, some Member States have carried out experiments in primary schools. In Belgium, children with difficulties spend three hours a week with a pupil in the last year who becomes their tutor ; this experimental tutorship system seems equally beneficial for both parties.

In Spain, an experimental programme began in 1985-86, with the aim of reforming the curriculum of the lower and intermediate cycles of general basic education (6 - 14 years). Different sorts of centres are taking part in this experiment (urban, rural, public, private, etc.). This programme attempts to tackle learning to read and write by new methods, with the teachers indicating clearly the finality of this learning, intervening as soon as difficulties present themselves and also including the parents in this. Special attention is paid to pupils experiencing difficulties, notably by the possibility of organising the class into small groups for certain activities. Extra teachers are also made available for those pupils experiencing the greatest difficulties. In the most disadvantaged areas, compensatory educational games have been proposed. Librairies have been installed in schools. Psycho-educational teams, with the task of identifying pupils in difficulties, have been increased.

In Ireland, in the context of a project to strengthen links between school and family, teachers have visited the homes of children with difficulties. This contact with parents seems to have had a positive effect on the motivation of the latter.

In an experiment in Luxembourg, trainee teachers were placed in charge of children with difficulties. The trainee spends one year with the child, follows progress, assists and builds up a relationship of trust with the child.

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In many Member States measures have been adopted for children of migrant workers (additional courses in the mother tongue and culture of origin). In Greece, reception classes for immigrant children returning to their country of origin have been organized.

In some Member States measures have also been adopted at secondary level.

In Belgium, pupils who have not attained a sufficient standard to enter secondary school are placed in special first-year classes.

In France, an approach tailored to specific needs has been adopted at secondary level. In the intermediate vocational schools, teams of teachers study the best methods for teaching children with difficulties.

In Italy, action is taken to encourage dropouts to return to school (meetings with parents, informing and increasing the awareness of teachers, parents and psychologists).

B. Reconsidering and developing the objectives of language skills at primary level

In some Member States, the public authorities have taken measures to reinforce the learning of the mother tongue (national language) at primary level (reading, writing and communication).

Reforms at primary level in this area are underway in France and in Portugal ; for example, children will be encouraged to read books of practical relevance to everyday life.

In the Netherlands, specialized teaching materials are made available to teachers in the context of the OSM project (education and social environment) and the educational services may be asked for assistance in evaluating pupil's needs and how to respond to them (GEON project on education, tailored to specific needs).

In Portugal, efforts for in-service training of teachers of Portuguese have been intensified.

In the United Kingdom, discussions are in progress on the objectives of the teaching of English and the assessment of pupils' progress. An experiment is underway designed to extend the writing skills of 5-16 year-olds. The Assessment of Performance Unit is continuing its work of monitoring pupil's progress in the mother tongue.

The gradual learning of reading and the development of this capacity are specially monitored in primary schools in the Federal Republic of Germany. A number of reading competitions are organized with the help of publishing houses and bookshops. The schools regularly receive recommendations concerning particularly stimulating books to encourage private reading.

C. Preventing loss of skills

In most Member States, action has been taken to consolidate knowledge of the mother tongue and prevent the loss of skills; this often entails setting up librairies or documentation centres in schools (France, Federal Republic) or mobile librairies (Ireland, Netherlands and United Kingdom).
Attention should be drawn to the activities of the community centres (Netherlands) and the contribution made by local librairies (France).

In Portugal, a training programme has been launched for organisers of summer librairies ; a monthly newspapar is also being produced. Its 50 000 copies are distributed freely, and are intended for adults who have just-learnt to read.

Action has also been initiated to encourage young people who left school on completion of compulsory education to continue their studies (France, Italy).
In Greece, experimental literacy classes are given during military service for national servicemen who did not complete their compulsory education.

In the case of young unemployed workers, integration and retraining course are organized in France, while upgrading courses are provided by the Länder in the Federal Republic, and in the United Kingdom. For adults, reading campaigns are organized in France by the Ministry of Vocational Training and Culture and by trade associations in Ireland (trade unions, farm workers, etc).

D. Initial and in service teacher training

As regards initial teacher training at primary level, certain Member States have decided to extend its duration (from two to three years in Belgium and in Ireland and three to four years in France and in the Netherlands). Other countries have decided to

raise the standards of this training (university degree will be required of future teachers in France, in Italy, in Greece and in Portugal ; this is already the case in Ireland and in the United Kingdom).

Learning to teach the basics of reading and writing is an essential part of the initial and in-service training of teachers in primary schools in the Federal Republic of Germany. Teachers in special primary schools receive their own training which qualifies them to teach reading and writing to pupils in difficulty.

E. Literacy campaigns

Campaigns have been conducted in the United Kingdom for the last ten years. There are two centres which specialize in combating adult illiteracy, one in England and one in Scotland. They organize national campaigns to encourage reading.

In Luxembourg, campaigns were launched by the Ministry of Education, and teachers are responsible for the follow-up.

In some Member States (Belgium, France, Greece, Italy and Ireland) adult literacy does not come under the Ministry of Education. Campaigns are, however, sometimes carried out in these countries by non-governmental literacy promotion bodies, generally with media support. Campaigns of this type are underway in Dutch speaking Belgium (organised by Alfabetisering Vlaanderen) and in French-speaking Belgium (organised by "Lire et Ecrire", which brings together various associations and receives support from the public authorities).

In Spain, in 1984-85, the Ministry of Education and Science launched a literacy programme to which certain credits were allocated and which was defined in the Real Decreto de Compensatoria (11/5/83). Areas have been selected for the implementation of this programme. Agreements have been made with local associations (public and private) and links established with all the interested local institutions ; various ministries are involved with this programme : the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture and the Armed Forces. A permanent teacher training programme is also planned.

In France, reading campaigns are financed by the Ministry of Culture, but have no great influence on the number of readers. Since 1984 an inter-ministerial working party has been entrusted with the task of initiating and coordinating measures to promote adult literacy.

In Italy, following a recent ministerial circular, the length of literacy courses is now two years.

In Ireland, the 38 adult education organizers are responsible for literacy campaigns. They come under the Vocational Education Committees and a specific budget appropriation for the promotion of literacy was placed at their disposal this year for the first time.

In the Netherlands, in view of the large number of illiteracy schemes that exist, legal regulations have been made ; there is also a national institute which develops material and carries out research.

In Portugal, law nr 3/79, an outline law on the elimination of illiteracy and on basic adult education entrusts the Government with the responsability for drawing up the National Programme for Illiteracy and Basic Adult Education (NPIBAE) ; this law has led to the creation of the National Council for Illiteracy and Basic Adult Education (NCIBAE) which is attached to the National Assembly. The NPIBAE draws up the reference framework for the 1980's for the actions taken within the field of adult education. Seven basic programmes have been outlined. The actions proposed in these programmes are being carried out in conjunction with various associated institutions. The NPIBAE's main concern is to establish a link between illiteracy, adult education and the overall development of communities and regions.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, two major literacy schemes are being organized by the Federal Ministry for Education and Science. These programmes, which are implemented by the Deutschhochschulverband throughout all the adult education institutes in the Federal Republic of Germany, stress the following points :

- the investigation of causes of illiteracy ;
- the development of methods for teaching on a one-to-one basis ;
- the upgrading of basic skills ;
- the development of courses to bridge the gap between literacy training and the training of instructors.

In the United Kingdom, in particular in England and Wales, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit intervenes as a central unit for helping local statutory and voluntary organisations to establish new programmes and to develop existing courses with a view to meeting the needs of their communities. Subsidised entirely by central government, the A.L.B.S.U. provides advice and guidance, finances local innovative projects, writes and publishes teaching material and finances regional and national teacher training courses.

F. Distance learning

While distance literacy courses are given in several Member States, it is generally agreed that they do no more than provide encouragement. An instructor is of great importance for illiterates and, consequently, face-to-face teaching is much more beneficial.

Programmes entitled "On the Move" are broadcast on British radio and television to motivate illiterates. In the Netherlands a course on every day language for semi-literates is broadcasted.

The German Federal Republic supports radio projects. Spots in the programmes are designed to motivate illiterates and encourage them to attend courses.

In Spain, a national centre provides distance learning courses.

In Greece, plans have been made to organise distance learning courses next year in collaboration with the Greek universities. The courses will be prepared by about a hundred groups engaged in literacy campaigns.

In Italy, CATTID, the Centre for Distance Learning, has been created at "La Sapienza", the university of Rome.

In Portugal, television is used in the framework of preparatory education. These teaching programmes have allowed thousands of young people living in areas remote from the main urban centres, or which do not possess preparatory schools, to follow the six years of compulsory education.

IV. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ACTION

The conclusions of 4 June 1984 indicate that, with a view to supporting the action taken by the Member States the Commission was requested, within the limits of its financial resources, to organize exchanges of information between national experts on various aspects of illiteracy.

A. Measures taken by the Commission to organize exchanges of information

A.a. To carry out this taks, the Commission set up a group of national officials concerned with the promotion of literacy. The members of this group, appointed by the Ministries of Education may be assisted by experts; the group meets regularly in Brussels (see list of members in Annex XIII). Its purpose is to guide Community action and advise the Commission.
The group's discussions resulted in the production of the present report and national annexes reviewed and checked by the national officials. An outline of the situation at Community level emerged and measures were proposed in the course of the meetings.

A.b. The Belgian organization, "Lire et Ecrire", was entrusted with the task of conducting a study entitled, "Les itinéraires d'analphabétisme" (paths of illiteracy).
As part of wide-ranging literacy campaign, "Lire et écrire", focuses and coordinates the activities of various French-speaking Belgian organizations which hold literacy classes at local level for young people and adults.
The study sought to identify the danger spots for drop-outs which could be the beginning of the road to illiteracy in order to develop strategies and pinpoint the appropriate points during the school career for their implementation.
The method of investigation used for the study entailed interviewing adults in literacy courses in Belgium, the Federal Republic, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to identify the difficulties encountered during compulsory education and the causes of loss of motivation. (see Annex XVI the summary and conclusions of the study and the preventive measures at school suggested by the authors.

A.c. Use of the Eurydice information network

In March '85, shortly after the working group's first meeting, the Eurydice Central Unit in Brussels asked each National Unit to provide the following information :

a) details of which official authorities were actively involved in the field of illiteracy and the amount of any Government money earmarked for this area;

b) details of legislation, regulations or ministerial circulars relating to the fight against illiteracy;

c) details of published material dealing with the topic of illiteracy.

A summary of the replies is contained in Annexes XIV and XV.

The Eurydice Central Unit has compiled a bibliography of relevant literature. The bibliography comprises a list of material available in all Member States. On the one hand it lists studies relating to work done in individual Member States, and on the other hand it contains details of work done on a Community-wide basis

A.d. Study visits

With the aim of further promoting the exchange of information about current work being carried out in the field of illiteracy, the Commission has named illiteracy as one of the subject areas eligible for study-visit grants during 1985/1986. The study visits (of about one week) are intended for groups of teacher trainers, inspectors, advisers or others active in specific fields of education and their purpose is to encourage the exchange of information and transfer of experience within the Community.

The first of these visits was specifically organized for the members of the working party; it took place in February 1986 in the Netherlands and Belgium.

A.e. Conferences

The Commission has provided funds for and participated in two European conferences. One was held on 6 September 1985, to celebrate the international day of illiteracy, by the Belgian organization "Lire et Ecrire". Its theme was illiteracy in industrialized countries.

The second European conference financed by the Commission was held in Odenburg in October 1985.
The Conference was dealt with the subject of "Literacy as basic education for adults".

B. Taking account of the literacy problem in other Community action

B.a. The Commission is making an effort to organize active interaction between the various sectors of Community education policy. Combatting illiteracy is hence an important aspect of measures to promote equal opportunity (in particular with regard to the children of migrant workers). Illiteracy is also a problem in the teaching of foreign languages which, to be successful, presupposes competence in the mother tongue. Under the programme on the transition of young people from school to adult and working life, "Transition II", illiteracy and semi-literacy are tackled in several projects. The Manchester Inner City project and the Northamptonshire project (both part of the UK Low Archievers Programme) broached the problem of illiteracy by creating special classes, with small numbers and much individual attention.

The Dublin Inner City project encompasses several actions for illiterates. Some are carried out within the school system (high teacher/student ratio, modular curricula and learning by

doing). Some, implemented on private initiative, are intended to help adults. Special programmes for adapting to life in society, comprising, where necessary, literacy courses, are also run in Dublin to help young unemployed persons or young women wishing to reintegrate into working life.

Remarkable results are achieved by these projects, mainly on account of the promoters' great devotion, the high staff/pupil ratio, and the involvement of the social community and the families.

The work programme implementing the resolution on the introduction of new information technologies in schools is mainly aimed at familiarizing all pupils with NITs and so preventing the forming of an elite who alone would have access to information.
With this in mind, particular attention is given to disadvantaged pupils.

A Summer School was held in July 1985 in Liège with particular reference to the introduction of NITs in primary schools. Researchers (computer experts and educationalists) from all the Member States discussed in particular the use of NITs in developing basic skills.
Some were of the opinion that NITs would be likely to facilitate the acquisition and mastery of basic concepts and would help the individual learning process by drawing on the pupil's cognitive, personal and socially acquired knowledge. The computer would in fact be able to encourage an individual approach and provide the teacher with an aid incorporating all the flexibility required to take account of pupils' individual needs. Teachers would, however, need to be trained in the optimal pedagogic use of the computer.

B.b. Under the European Social Fund, some adult literacy schemes of particularly innovative nature may receive financing where they form an integral part of a vocational training course or constitute an essential first module in the course.

Training for literacy instructors is also sometimes supported by the fund in the case of unemployed persons or persons taking up this occupation for the first time.

Literacy courses for school-age children are not eligible under the European Social Fund.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Since it is quite clear that it is not possible merely by means of compulsory schooling alone to contain illiteracy, other solutions have to be envisaged. To be wholly effective, these initiatives should be part of an overall programme aimed both at the prevention of illiteracy at school and promoting literacy among adults. Such a programme should involve all levels of education: nursery school, to stimulate in children the desire to learn to read and write; in primary, to learn the basic skills; in secondary, to master and consolidate what has been learned through regular practice. This programme should be extended to adult level since the link between illiterate parents and failure at school has been demonstrated on many occasions.

Preventive action should be taken from the nursery school on to motivate children as early as possible to read. Without teaching reading prematurely, children should be gradually familiarised with the written word and helped to understand that reading can be useful, instructive and a source of pleasure. So, for example, it would be interesting by means of very practical experiments to show the usefulness of the written word in daily life, e.g. drafting of cooking recipes.

The nursery school should be the first place where children's difficulties with regard to oral expression and psychomotor ability should be discerned since it has been established that reading can only be mastered with a good knowledge of the spoken language as the child needs to make the link between the written word and its oral vocabulary. We should also remember the importance of the nursery school in the learning process; studies have shown that children who have been to nursery school have a greater chance of making a success of school than others.

As regards the other levels of education, primary and secondary, this overall programme should pursue precise objectives and cover the various aspects of the educational system, namely the monitoring of absences, teacher training, school syllabuses, the organisation of time and resources, the equipment of the premises, the openness of the school to the outside world, teaching materials, evaluation of progress and assessment of knowledge, teaching methods, team work and psychological, medical and social guidance.

Effective monitoring of attendance at classes by all pupils of compulsory school age appears to be essential. Monitoring would have the double advantage of bringing children back to school and providing a better understanding of the reasons for absenteeism. Moreover, teaching teams could be organised to ensure more individualised tuition for children absent for health reasons and thus prevent them from falling behind their class-mates in their schoolwork.

Initial and in-service teacher training in combatting illiteracy and the familiarisation of teachers with the problems of the most disadvantaged families are fundamental as the child's relationship with the teacher will be a determining factor in his perception of the school and will influence his desire to learn.

In basic teacher training, it should be clearly explained that each child (unless suffering from a serious mental handicap) is capable of learning to read and write and that the persisting percentage of children who fail to do so is in no way inevitable. Teachers should be prepared for the broad range of situations which they are likely to encounter in class, for example, by means of practical training with literacy organisations. Clear objectives should be defined in such a way as to adapt the teaching strategy to a precise context. During basic training, it should be clearly shown that the teachers' role is not limited to a technical transmission of knowledge but that their teaching contribution will be more effective if it is based on a good knowledge of the pupils, their needs, their abilities and the problems affecting their school life (family, cultural and linguistic circumstances). They should be training to enter into a dialogue with the parents and be in a position to encourage them to take a more active interest in their children's school career. They should be in a position to develop clear evaluation techniques to take account of the progress of each child. Practical teamwork, with other teachers, psychologists, and social workers should be part of basic training course syllabusses.

An energetic campaign should nevertheless be launched as a priority with regard to in-service teacher training, given in particular, the current low rate of recruitment of teachers in the Member States. The in-service training courses should be based on a joint project for pupils, parents and all the staff in the educational establishment (or several establishments), aimed at a clear and accessible medium-term objective for the learning of reading and writing by everyone. These courses should enable serving teachers to update themselves regularly on recent developments in education (for example, the contribution of the NITs to the learning of reading and writing). These courses should bring together teachers of all disciplines in secondary schools to encourage teamwork. They should also involve visits to or training periods with bodies dealing with disadvantaged children and bodies dealing with adults so that teachers would be placed in a better position to conduct a relationship with the parents of children in difficulty. Lastly, in-service training courses should include opportunities to meet social workers.

The syllabuses should be sufficiently flexible to allow the teacher to react at any moment to a specific problem. They should also be very flexible to allow each pupil to progress at his own rate.

Children should not be forced into a situation in which they are required to learn to read before they are ready to confront this challenge; it should be remembered that the process of learning to read and write may be spread over the ages of 5 to 8 years. The usefulness of reading should be underlined as a means, for example, of acquiring knowledge or of finding out information for oneself or as a pastime providing pleasure. If a gradual approach of this kind is adopted, the child will have a greater chance of developing the desire to read when he is ready and then every effort should be made to ensure that the child has many occasions on which to practise this recently acquired skill.

As regards the content of syllabusses, if we consider on the one hand that children in difficulty frequently come from socially and culturally disadvantaged environments and, on the other hand, that the transmission of knowledge at school level generally draws on examples and situations experienced by socially priviliged families, it is important, if the interest of all the children is to be aroused, for the number of examples which take account of a whole range of possible situations, to be increased.

Similarly, knowledge should be evaluated in a way that takes account of each pupil's personal progress rather than on a comparative basis which could inhibit pupils making slower progress.

The allocation of both human and material resources is essential. The problems posed by the existence of big classes or classes with pupils at different levels or again classes with pupils who learn slowly or experience learning difficulties could be alleviated by allocating two teachers to certain classes. There must be a sufficient number of teachers to attend to children who need special help, either in small groups or individually.

The equipment of premises is also important; children should have easy access to books and other reading materials and areas should be set aside for pupils who wish, for example,to relax by reading a book which particularly appeals to them.

Psychological, medical and social guidance should be provided at all levels of education. Regular medical visits are necessary both at the pre-school stage and also in the first years of schooling so as to detect hearing or visual defects or any other health problem likely to give rise to learning difficulties.

Apart from psychological aid for pupils in difficulty, which would certainly be beneficial, children must be allowed the time to adapt to their school environment and gradually become familiar with the discipline structures imposed by the school. They should be encouraged to pay attention, to concentrate, to think and to cooperate, not only with the teacher but also with their classmates. Teamwork should be encouraged to develop in the children a team spirit and a willingness to help each other. If we can succeed in establishing a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and in showing that learning is not only useful but also interesting and pleasant, we shall eliminate stress and anxiety factors and the child will acquire the self-confidence which he needs to integrate constructively in the learning process.

Lastly, where family support is lacking, the teachers should be able to play a role likely to offset this handicap.

On the pedagogic level, the link with daily life should be established since it is important to take account of the variety of social and family situations in the texts presented to the child learning to read and write. Reference to the child's own experience is essential in basic learning to make him well aware of its relevance. A differentiated approach to teaching which takes account of what each child has absorbed and his intellectual development is consequently of prime importance. A teaching method involving projects is also of use since it establishes a close link between learning and its benefits. A teaching method involving projects is also of use since it establishes a close link between learning and its benefits and enables the pupil to "manage" his own development. At the same time, account should be taken in monitoring knowledge of each pupil's personal achievement rather than monitoring on a comparative basis which could inhibit pupils making slower progress. Evaluation schemes of this kind should be developed.

The openness of the school to the outside world plays a fundamental role in combatting illiteracy. In the event of special difficulties, the teachers should have sufficient time to contact parents with a view to inducing them, as part of a triangular relationship (teacher, parent and child), to participate in an effort to solve the problem. Parents should be encouraged to spend some time at home with their children, looking at books or practising reading. Where parents are themselves illiterate, the schools should also envisage assuming responsibility for educating them, too, by teaching them to read at the same time as their children.

Parents should be encouraged to participate actively in school life and to appreciate the role played by the school in preparing young people for adult life. From this point of view, the school and the family are in partnership and on this basis parents should be encouraged to play an active role in school life.

In cases where households have hardly any reading material, school can play a constructive role in offering access to the written word. They can, for example, encourage children to take home school library books, parents to come to school to use the school library and borrow books to read at home; they can form book clubs at school, and organise sales of sencond-hand books. The schools can also make children aware of possibilities locally such as the public lending library, documentation centres, museums or tourist information centres, all of which, in fact, can provide pupils with access to the written word.

Lastly, it is essential for the schools to operate in an open context, community-spirited, and for the ties with the outside world to be close and solid. School should be attractive both to the parents and to the pupils. The education given to the pupils should not be confined to the school environment but extend beyond the horizon of the school to take acoount of the outside world in such a way that pupils realise the relevance of the education they are receiving, knowing that it is based on reality.

Lastly, the reinforcement of means of gathering information on experiments in combating illiteracy, the steps taken, the teaching material, etc., are important elements for anyone interested in this problem.

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The corellation between children in difficulty at school and illiterate parents has been demonstrated. If nothing is done to combat adult illiteracy, the efforts made at school are liable to have litte impact: the child whose parents are illiterate will benefit little from the education, no matter how careful the approach which is offered by the school, since the parent's attitude will tend to make the young people reject it.

The problem therefore has to be tackled at two levels, aiming both a young people in their early years at school (with careful monitoring throughout schooling to avoid any relapse) and at illiterate adults.

Some schemes intended to combat illiteracy among parents may be implemented by the school but it is quite clear that it is not up to schools to organise adult literacy training. Other solutions must be envisaged which, in certain Member States, are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

With regard to adult literacy training, the following points appear to be basic to any programme.

The training of instructors is essential regardless of whether they are volunteers or serving teachers. Adults following literacy classes should be given attention and account be taken of their individual needs.

Teaching material should be selected with care.

The timetable for such classes is very important : classes during the day are suitable for unemployed adults but evening classes must be provided for working adults.

It is essential that good publicity be given to literacy classes since only a low percentage of illiterates attends such classes. It would, moreover, be interesting to examine the reasons why people do not enrol for classes. (A feeling of shame, fees to high, distances, lack of information).

Here, as at school level, the teaching approach is very important. Reading and writing should be taught with reference to their practical applications in daily life, (reading advertisements, timetables, maps, filling in forms, and writing cheques).

Literacy campaigns should consequently be aimed at transmitting the message that reading and writing are useful and that illiteracy is not a problem to be ashamed of. Literacy campaigns and classes should also aim to take account of the various types of illiteracy among adults : adults who have never acquired basic skills in reading and writing, adults who have lost the skills they had previously acquired, migrants and ethnic and cultural minorities.

Although national campaigns have met with great success, it seems important that they should be followed up at regional level since needs vary from one region to another ; moreover, it is easy to coordinate cooperation between the various partners (volontary organisations, local authorities responsible for education, employers, trade unions, etc.) at regional level.

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The discussions held within the working party were based on the observations that, while exact figures were not available, illiteracy currently affects approximately 5 % of the indigenous population in all Member States. As compulsory schooling has not, on its own, succeeded in eliminating the problem, other solutions based on school have to be found. It is important that national governments act quickly to implement measures designed to prevent and combat illiteracy.

Among these measures, the most important sphere of action is that of teacher training. All necessary efforts should be made to ensure that courses provide an appropriate preparation for the real classroom situation. Teachers have to be trained to identify as early as possible pupils liable to be at risk, to take appropriate action so that these pupils do not fall behind and to monitor pupils at all stages. Preventive measures should be taken in nursery and primary schools and in the first stage of secondary school, but all teachers should be vigilant to prevent pupils from regressing through lack of practice in reading or writing.

Available resources, both in terms of finance and staff, are another important factor in combatting illiteracy. Governments should therefore make provision for a special budget to prevent illiteracy at school; Measures should also be taken to ensure adequate staffing levels in schools to make a flexible approach possible.

The local authorities should also be encouraged to organize in-service training for teachers holding key posts in the teaching of reading and writing. These classes should in particular aim to establish a relationship between adult literacy training and efforts at school level.

Lastly, it is important that progress made to date in adult literacy training should be maintained.

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VI. WORK PROGRAMME 1987-1988

1. The working party "Fight against illiteracy", under the control of the Commission, will continue to meet twice a year in Brussels, with the aim of guiding Community action, advising the Commission and exchanging information on the situation in the different Member States.

2. A European colloquium will be held in September 1987 ; its theme will be "The Fight against illiteracy in the Member States".

3. Study visits, intended mainly for teacher trainers, representatives of teacher associations, inspectors and adult literacy training instructors, will mainly provide for visits to associations dealing with illiteracy, in particular youth literacy ; a special visit for the working group.

4. An action research project will be conducted at pilot schools in several Member States to test some of the measures proposed at nursery, primary and lower secondary school levels. Two or three schools will be selected from particularly disadvantaged areas in several Member States, and will be monitored by a literacy expert.

5. A summer school will be organised where educationalists and psychologists will be able to exchange views and take stock of the research on basic learning (reading, writing and arithmetic) and of pupils in difficulty. Teachers would also be invited to take part, as would adult literacy instructors. The summer school will tackle specific aspects of the problem (for example : examination failure at basic learning levels, assessment, relations between school and family, contribution of the new technologies ...) and will also provide an opportunity for participants to acquaint temselves with the newest teaching materials.

6. Studies will be launched on the positive and negative contributions made by new technologies and the media to basic learning (reading, writing and arithmetic) ; on identifying the most appropriate tests for quantifying the number of illiterates ; on the phases and circumstances surrounding the progressive loss of the ability to read, write and calculate, after the schooling period as well as on possible remedies aimed at regaining these abilities.

7. The examination of means aimed at updating information campaigns.

8. The Commission will make every effort to organise these actions with the services concerned with vocational training and with the support of the European Social Fund.

ANNEX I : BELGIUM

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOL SYSTEM AND MEASURES DESIGNED TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

Until 1983 compulsory education ("obligation d'instruction") was imposed by law. Under this system children were either required to attend school or to be taught at home by private arrangement. The law of 29 June 1983, published in the Official Gazette of 6 July, specifically requires compulsory school attendance ("obligation scolaire"), i.e. 12 years of compulsory schooling between the ages of 6 and 18. Compulsory schooling starts following the summer holidays of the year in which the child reaches the age of 6. Monitoring of such attendance is carried out by inspectors.

Each local authority has a register of names of all 6-18 year olds, a copy of which is made available to the inspectorate. The inspectors check the schools'attendance lists every year to ensure that those on the register are attending school. In the case of children who are not at school, the inspectors contact the parents or the tutors, since the children involved may receive instruction at home. If no clear and satisfactory explanation is received the inspectors may refer the matter to the courts.

Regular attendance is also subject to checks and supervision. Legal and/or adequate grounds must be given for absence from school. In spite of all these legal arrangements there are still pupils whose attendance, for various reasons, is irregular or non-existent. Supervision poses a particular problem in large towns, where it is difficult to keep a check on movements from one municipality to another, or where pupils attend school in one area but live in another. Sometimes children are excluded from a school on disciplinary grounds and do not immediately succeed in finding another prepared to take them. Data on this problem are not available.

PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

Since young male Belgians have to pass a test before starting their military service, the army has statistics which provide a rough indication of the extent of illiteracy amongst that particular sector of the population(i.e. 19-20 year old ablebodied males). Extrapolated to the Belgian population as a whole these statistics suggest that as many as 5 % of the country's population may be illiterate.

The experience of literacy campaigns to date has demonstrated the importance of the ability to read and write for social, cultural and economic emancipation and as regards personal development.

The following problem areas have been identified :

1. How can illiteracy be prevented ? How can one prevent a situation in which young people leave education without being able to read or write, thereby running the risk of relapsing into illiteracy after a certain time ?

2. What are the appropriate provisions for people who are currently illiterate ?
   The link between these problems and education in general is obvious.

Article 1 of the law of 29 June 1983 ("obligation scolaire") states : "compulsory education shall be fulltime until the age of 15 and cover no more than 7 year of primary and at least the 2 first years of full secondary schooling".

As the result of the 7-year limit on primary schooling some pupils who are unable to read and write will end up in the so-called reception class ("classe d'accueil") at secondary level. The teaching dispensed by most teachers is in fact insufficiently differentiated : they tend to give the same lessons at the same level and at the same time to all pupils in the class; children who have not reached the required level by the end of the year are forced to repeat a year, and with 2 or more repeats primary education cannot be completed.

to succeed where primary education has failed is a considerable problem for secondary school reception class teachers who have not been prepared for this kind of teaching.

Thus, a lack of individualized tuition at primary level, and a lack of training of lower secondary school teachers in coping with pupils who have not successfully completed primary education, could explain why a number of pupils who have regularly attended school fail to reach a satisfactory standard in reading and writing. These problems could to some extent be resolved if (initial and in-service) teacher-training was improved.

On the other hand, parents and teachers sometimes adopt a resigned or fatalistic attitude regarding the learning problems of young people ("if there are problems at home, what can we do for them at school ?"). Parents also do not expect their children to know more than they do.

Another problem is that of migrant children : this is a category which requires special attention, particularly where illiteracy also exists among the parents.

Parents must be involved in the learning process, particularly where their children are risk. This should take the form of preventive action aimed at young people at shool, combined whith simultaneous remedial action to raise the parents'literacy standards.

C. MEASURES TO COUNTER ILLITERACY

I. AT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Measures have been taken - both structurally and on an experimental basis - at different levels of the education system, to offer pupils the best education possible.

1. Pre-school education

Although it is not compulsory, parents are very much encouraged to allow their children to follow pre-school education on a regula basis, particularly from the age of 4 or 5.

1.1 Experiments in familiarising young children with the written word have been organized in some nursery schools. The aim is to conve to the children -by means of story reading by the teacher, the preparation of recipes, descriptions of class projects, etc.- tha the symbols have meaning and can give pleasure. The results have been encouraging so long as teachers are not tempted into making a premature attempt at teaching the children to read and write.

1.2 As far as migrants are concerned, a special effort is being made in the sense that part-time teachers are made available to school with more than 30 % migrant children. In a number of schools a teacher from the country of origin is responsible for developing oral communication in the mother tongue.

2. Primary education

Educational changes have been introduced in a number of schools, particularly in reformed primary schools. These take the form of individualization and differentiation ; working with groups of children according to their level of progress ; and involving pare

The following steps have also been taken :

- within the context of the usual curriculum, schools may organize teaching in such a way as to enable teachers to help pupils, either individually or in small groups, when minor assimilation problems occur (remedial teaching);

- again within the context of the usual curriculum, language teach may take a certain number of hours per week to develop teaching of the language of the host country to migrant children ;

- additional (temporary) teachers may be made available to schools with more than 30 % migrant children ;

- in a number of schools with migrant children teachers from countr of origin provide teaching in their own language and culture for number of hours per week ;

- special schools are available for children with mental handicaps learning difficulties ; teaching takes place in small groups in accordance with the individual learning pace of each child ;

- under a "tutorial" system, young children with learning difficult may be helped by older pupils (5th and 6th years) for a number of hours per week. In most cases both partners benefit from the experience.

In spite of these measures, a number of problems persist due to a vari of causes. One of these is the fact that the relationships between th school and the family, and the school and society, are not always sufficiently taken into account in day-to-day educational practice.

3. secondary education

3.1. Certain schools provide a special transitional year (first year E for pupils who, for various reasons, have failed to reach the required level by the beginning of secondary education.

3.2. Part-time compulsory education and up-dated vocational training available to young people who leave school at an early age becaus they feel that it has little or nothing to offer.

3.3. Special secondary education for young people with certain mental, physical, sensory or psychological handicaps is being developed.

II REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Counselling services : Health and Guidance Centres, the purpose of which is to advise and assist young people with problems relating to their studies, relationships or health, operate in conjunction with the schools and parents.

2. Now that the period of compulsory education has been extended, new educational opportunities can be created -with new teaching method to enable pupils to become proficient in their own language, readi and mathematics.

3. Reading is also being stimulated by libraries. School libraries will be expanded .

4. We should also point out the considerable expansion in Belgium of education for social advancement (evening and weekend course etc.), which provides extensive backup possibilities for initia literacy training or retraining.

IV. TEACHER

The training of nursery, primary and lower secondary school teachers has been extended from 2 to 3 years, with greater emphasis on general and practical training.

V. ADULT ILITERACY PROJECTS

Adult literacy campaigns in Belgium are not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education but of the Ministries for the Dutch and French-speaking communities, which co-finance these activities.

They are organized by coordinating bodies, such as the non-profit making organizations "Alfabetisering Vlaanderen" and "Lire et Ecrire" The aim of these associations is to stimulate, coordinate and support literacy work among adults. The projects developed in this way are increasingly organized or a decentralized basis.

The objectives of a typical literacy project are as follows :

a) to improve reading and writing skills ;

b) to encourage independance and solidarity ;

c) to encourage personal development and social integration ;

d) to foster the establishment of a basic education network for the least educated adults.

A great many literacy courses have been set up by departments responsi for the problems of migrants. These classes are often aimed at women.

Another form of adult education is so-called "second chance education". It is aimed at adults who have failed to obtain a secondary education qualification during their normal school period, and offers them a new chance of obtaining such a diploma.

The various projects are coordinated by a steering committee attached to the Ministry of Education.

Literacy activities are advertised on radio, television and in the written press. These information campaigns are well received.

Publicity campaigns have also been organized within the context of "international illiteracy day" and national action weeks.

VI. DISTANCE TEACHING

Programmes designed to motivate illiterate people are broadcast on the radio. Private tutor - based systems, however, seem to be more effective

ANNEX II : DANEMARK

The Fight Against Illiteracy

- described from a Danish starting point

A Dane would spontaneously be astonished at a title called "The Fight Against Illiteracy - described from a Danish starting point". However, there is every reason to look at the subject, also from such a point of view.

It is true that in Denmark there has been a very long tradition of aiming strongly at preventing illiteracy from coming into existence. Such efforts have been made

- in connection with children who had problems with their early language development,
- in connection with those pupils at the age of the compulsory education who found it extremely difficult to learn reading, and

in connection with adults who had never really started reading.

The following description of "The Fight Against Illiteracy" must be seen on the basis of this tradition.

Furthermore, however, a new topicality has emerged during recent years in connection with immigrants and refugees from different cultural backgrounds and different educational traditions - coupled with an attitude towards the authority of the educational system which is different from the Danish attitude (Skov, 1986).

Seen in a larger connection, however, a far more extensive problem is the fact that during the last decades social expectations regarding the reading competence of the population have increased so strongly that the concept "functional illiteracy" can be expected to be here to stay and also in Denmark clearly indicates that a problem which has so far concerned only relatively few citizens now seems capable of representing a menace to the society as such.

A definition of the concepts is necessary, and International Reading Association's descriptions "literate"/"illiterate" and "functional literate"/"functional illiterate" (Jansen, 1966; IRA, 1974) cannot be contested, not from a Danish perspective either.

That "illiteracy" is also a subject to be considered carefully in a society in which the traditional opinion is that it does not (any more) include illiterates, will - as mentioned above - be a surprise to some Danes.

However, it will still be necessary for the Danish educational system to take the concepts "literacy" and - especially - "functional illiteracy" extremely seriously.

From a Danish point of view the subject can be described as follows:

Danish children read at a relatively late stage
- but then they read much

Children in Denmark become "literates" relatively late. As a rule, most children in Denmark are not expected to be able to read reasonably satisfactorily until the age of 8, perhaps 9, whereas in many other countries the majority of the children are expected to reach a satisfactory reading level a couple of years earlier.

At the age of 11, the Danish children - seen as a group - are fully as good readers as children in other countries (cf. Schmidt & Schmidt, 1984). The available surveys of the reading of Danish children show both that they read more and - especially - that they read far more independently and voluntarily than children in most other countries (Jansen et al., 1978; Zürcher, 1981).

"Actual" illiterates in Denmark
- a survey

However, this does not mean that there are no illiterates in Denmark. Even if, in accordance with the general international practice, the illiterates of the groups of heavily multi-

handicapped (groups who, today, also include readers, Fleischer, 1986), mentally handicapped, etc. are excluded, there are other groups in Denmark who ought to be pointed out in this connection:

Some (but certainly not all) groups of immigrants occasionally include persons who are unable to read both their own language, the official language of their native country, and Danish. In particular, it should be emphasized that in some groups of immigrants especially the women have very poor qualifications in reading - some of them must even be characterized as illiterates.

Out of the appr. 50,000 immigrants and refugees from countries in the third world staying in Denmark, well over 13,000 children are in the Danish primary school, Folkeskolen; appr. 6,000 children are 0-6 years old. It is noticeable that the number of children in kindergarten classes is appr. 1,700 - and that this number decreases to appr. 900 by grade 9 (and appr. 525 by grade 10).

It is estimated that 20% of the adults of the above groups are illiterates; there are no statistical accounts in the field, and this figure builds solely on a personal estimate. The percentage includes mainly persons from environments where they have either received no education whatsoever, or only received education for a few years, where there is no tradition of literary education, and where the attitude to formalized schooling and formalized education is quite different from the Danish attitude.

Although, as mentioned, "actual illiteracy" is rare in Denmark and is seen particularly among female immigrants from environments in the third world, there is another group of immigrants which should be pointed out in this connection, viz. the immigrants who have had only five years of schooling - or even less. After this short schooling, many of the immigrants of this group - which is not so small after all - have only had limited possibilities of maintaining their reading competence in their own language. They often seem to have great problems in learning to speak Danish and read Danish and, consequently, in completing even a short education.

Among the groups mentioned there is only a weak tradition of education, if any. An active effort is needed to enable these people to make use of the many possibilities of adult education. Further, they must be supported in utilizing the possibilities within the framework of the legislation for establishing classes with education both in their mother tongue and in Danish - and also in other "subjects" in a close connection with the instruction in both their mother tongue and Danish.

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Although, as it appears from the above, illiteracy in a traditional sense is definitely infrequent in Denmark, it can be found.

1: Illiteracy exists in some groups of immigrants (most often among the women). Apart from the above figures which - like the other information about immigrants and refugees in this account - are provided by Johannes Bang, Superintendant of Sepcial Education, Ministry of Education - no precise figures are available for the size of this group.

2: Among the extremely severely reading handicapped (= the most seriously affected dyslexics) there are actual illiterates However, this number is infinitesimally small and cannot be registered even in detailed statistics.

3: To a strongly limited extent, illiteracy is found among the oldest in the group of elderly people, most often among men who have had a very weak schooling. Also this figure is so small that it is unreasonable (and impossible) to name it.

Totally, group 2 and 3 amount to so few people that the figure is - and will be - ignored in any survey.

Functional illiterates in Denmark - an attempted survey

If, however, attention is focussed on the functional illiteracy rather than on what is traditionally understood by illiteracy, quite a different and to Denmark far more important issue is highlighted.

In particular, it is essential to consider the functional illiteracy, because during a couple of generations the society has shown this development:

- from a society dominated by agriculture and trade
- to an industrial and automation society and now
- further on towards a society mainly based on service and information.

This development has constantly made increasing demands on the reading competence of the individual citizens - seen in the light of their occupational possibilities. It is obvious that a satisfactory reading competence is no longer a static concept, but closely connected with both social demands and social offers and with individual qualifications. An earlier generally accepted either/or as "able to read><unable to read" is now getting less reasonable.

It is not sufficient to take the occupational demands into consideration. Also in the everyday life outside the economic life the citizens of today meet the obvious expectation that they are able to read e.g.:

- instructions about the sorting and collection of domestic garbage;
- the wording of official leaflets about questions of taxation;
- directions for the sowing of seeds in the vegetable garden and instructions for changing the gasket of the tap;
- television subtitles for foreign features as well as election material.

This list of examples can be continued almost interminably.

The above circumstances mean that it is not difficult, but impossible to formulate exact "measures" of what it means to be a "functional illiterate", and to expect such "measures" and "measurements" to be valid also a decade later. Now text television, personal computers, telephone displays, etc. have again changed the limits of what every citizen is expected to be able to read in order to function as - functionally - a reading citizen. Some of them are not able to do so.

It must be expected that the group of functional illiterates includes at any rate the following:

1: Heavily dyslexic children, young, and adults, i.e. persons who, either for inherited or acquired reasons, have extreme difficulty in learning to read and keeping up the learned skills (Tordrup, 1976). These people are able to read, but - - - .

Most often this group is estimated at at least 2% - probably more if including people who have extreme difficulty in reading for a period of time or more durably, due to traffic accidents, thrombi, etc. (Dalby et al., in preparation).

2: If also persons - who used to be called "backward", but are no longer diagnosed as such - were included in the group of functional illiterates, the total would presumably be at least 4%. The last 2% mentioned have difficulty in managing in the modern society, apparently mainly because of intellectual and linguistic handicaps.

3: Further, the group of functional illiterates includes the citizens in their mid-fifties or more who had a very poor profit from their schooling (which most efficiently 'vaccinated' them against any further education at a later stage. This group is very small in numbers, and it is declining.

However, also today there are children and young whose profit from their schooling is so limited that, coupled with constant educational failures, they find it extremely difficult to go much further. No doubt, this number of persons is very modest, but it belongs together with the other groups mentioned in this connection.

If group 1 and 2 are added to group 3, the total comes close to 5-6% of the population.

4: And if to the above three groups of persons handicapped heavily in different ways also group 4 - viz. persons who are so blocked emotionally that they cannot use their reading and actually do not read at all - is added, the total figure amounts to well over 8%.

5: If at the same time reading comprehension is required to acknowledge reading competence, the percentage will rise to minimum 10. This last group seems to be growing pari passu with the increasing social expectations.

With the change seen generally in connection with reading expectations from everybody in the society, it is no longer (just) a question of "learning to read" for the pupils (children as well as young and adults); now they must "read in order to learn". Minimum 10% is a qualified guess when it comes to the number of functional illiterates thus enumerated.

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The figures estimated above indicate the desirability of an exact definition of the concept "functional illiteracy". In some countries the concept is defined as "necessary adult knowledge in reading". Based on Swedish conditions, Hult, 1982, states some quite exact requirements for using the term "functional literacy". In his opinion, an adult person must:

"1: know the alphabet.

2: be able to write at a rate of 15 words per minute from a text of the degree of difficulty of LIX 20-25.

3: have a rate of writing of 90 words per minute with maximum 15% errors in a text of a degree of difficulty of LIX 20-25.

4: be able to spell well enough to communicate in writing.

5: be able to fill in common forms.

6: be able to follow simple instructions;
(translator's note: presumably written instructions).

7: be able to communicate with another person and in smaller groups.

8: be able to use the library.

9: be able to understand simple graphs and curves.

10: be able to read a hand-written connected text. Be able to write her/his own name in connected writing.

11: be able to speak without obvious language errors.

12: be able to make a simple sentence analysis.

13: know some of the contemporary literature."
(Translator's note: This point extends the concept extremely strongly; and Hult adds:)

"A person meeting the requirements will surely still have difficulty in getting on in society. By way of example, the rate of reading demanded by the society is higher than 90 words per minute. The television screen gives us an average feed of 110 words per minute, and the degree of diffculty is usually higher than LIX 20-25.

The list only moderately covers verbal communication. Although it is mentioned that a person ought to be able to communicate with another person and in smaller groups, these persons will often be acquaintances, fellow students, etc.

Contact with authorities and public officers is more difficult; in such cases, feelings of insecurity and inferiority are often activated." ... "And thus, in a direct way, the everyday life of the individual reader is illuminated, also through the last very depressing sentence."

It is essential to emphasize that although such accounts seem to be very obvious from e.g. a Scandinavian point of view, they are - at the same time while they are as exact as possible - formulated so broadly and in such detail that the group of persons who may thus be declared "functional illiterates" will come close to absolutely unreasonably high figures - figures which have no relevance with the necessary use of reading in the everyday life.

The reason for quoting Hult, 1982, is to point out that it will probably be realistic to calculate with definitions based on still increasing demands. In other words, norms laid down during this decade would probably be too modest in one or two decades, and fewer people would be able to meet the ('higher') norms enumerated at that time - unless the reading competence of the individual is increased.

If this will not be the case, we shall most likely draw close to a percentage of 10-15 functional illiterates. Some even fear a figure of 15-18% functional illiterates as a frightening and obvious possibility around the turn of the millennium.

"The Matthew tendency" in reading - a documented development

Much more serious (and a 'here-and-now reality') is the tendency which has been observed in Denmark for several years: the group of good readers in school increases, but so does the group of weak readers - even if not so markedly as the group of the best readers (Søegård et al., 1977; Jansen & Glæsel, 1977).

15-20 years ago it was expected to place abt. 1% of the pupils from the group of the weakest readers in grade 2-5 (= the 8-11 year-olds) and similarly 1% of the pupils from the group of the best readers. A nation-wide survey (Jansen & Kreiner, 1986) now shows that the weakest group has increased to 3% and the best group has grown to 8%.

This so-called "Matthew tendency" (named after St. Matthew, the evangelist - the best become better, the weakest become weaker), cf. e.g. the survey in Stanovich, 1986, seems to continue throughout school. It is possible that it is also reflected during the years of youth, but there is no statistical substantiation of this assumption. There are no reasonably applicable tests for the youth. Incidentally, no nation-wide surveys have been carried out regarding the reading competence of the young. Spot test accounts do not show that, seen as a group, the young continue to read more than before - as is the case as far as the children are concerned. Accounts of groups of recruits, etc., did not show the tendencies mentioned above, but it should be considered that these accounts are of an older date, and that they concern a clientele which is specific in several respects.

The Matthew tendency can be explained in different ways, i.a. it is well-known that a now more general individual reading education helps the best readers advance even more - but does not always give sufficient support to the weak readers.

The extremely well-functioning Danish school and children's library system (Jansen et al., 1978; Jansen, 1987) has meant that the best pupils have learned much, while the weakest have only rarely started to read better.

In this connection it is unavoidable to mention three partly unpleasant facts:

1: In the course of the last generation there has been a drastic cut in the time consumption in Danish, even at the stages (grade 3 and 4) when the reading competence of the pupils ought to be automatized (Jansen & Kreiner, 1986; Øregaard, 1986). This cut has meant that the development of the reading routine of the weakest pupils has not been stressed sufficiently in school; their standard has been so weak that they have not been motivated to work with the matter on their own (The Ministry of Education, 1987).

2: Apparently also the teacher training - which is relatively weak when it comes to methodology, especially in reading - is reflected in the Matthew tendency. Furthermore, the fact that there is no general in-service training in reading for teachers is probably partly responsible for the weak results of some pupils.

3: The best pupils 'serve themselves'; when they have first started, they learn to read better - and the disparity accelerates.

In any circumstances there is, no doubt, not one single, but many reasons for the Matthew tendency. All according to tendency and point of view, the results may be praised and it may be pointed out that far more pupils than before now become esssentially better readers - or the development may give cause for concern for the development, because some pupils are now becoming poorer readers than similar pupils before them.

The education of immigrant children - in reading

In this connection also the education of immigrant children in Folkeskolen should be mentioned.

It seems decisive to their education whether in the compulsory education it is possible to raise their standard in Danish (= their verbal vocabulary in Danish as well as their reading competence) to a level enabling them to follow a further education with both manual and literary elements on (almost) equal terms with the Danish pupils.

The lack of verbal qualifications and reading competence forms part of the reason why the general schooling of immigrant children does not always prove adequate when these children reach the years of youth.

In particular the problem should be pointed out which arises for pupils who come to Denmark at the age of 12-14 and thus receive only a few years of schooling before leaving the compulsory education.

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From the viewpoint of "functional illiteracy" it is necessary to indicate the real menace of the Matthew tendency to the out-of-school education, the adult education, and the whole voluntary adult education.

It is hardly altogether wrong to call attention to the (possible) dangerous social consequences of this tendency. It has happened before that when it is impossible to argue by means of words, the argumentation will be effected by means of violence.

In a society based on information the road to obtaining a voice in the decision making certainly does not go through lack of reading competence. This is true of other groups than just the immigrant pupils, etc.

<u>The early language development</u>
<u>- and functional illiteracy?</u>

From the most recent surveys of the pupils' general language development, reading development, and the development of their written language the following should be accentuated:

There is a very close connection between the standard of the children at the time when they start in the kindergarten class (at the age of 5-6) or in grade 1 one year later and their standard, as a group, at the time when they leave the compulsory education after 9 years, at the age of 15-16; a summary is presented in Nielsen et al., 1987.

This account mainly underlines that

- a late and uncertain language development and
- a general lack of linguistic support in the home,

often together with lack of emotional and social support in the home,

seem to be distressing background factors. These factors not only appear prior to the compulsory education, but seem to cast shadows as late as at the end of the compulsory education 10 years later.

Far from all of the pupils who, seen as a group, seem to have serious linguistic difficulties at the start of the schooling, become "functional illiterates"!

But in this group of children at the age of 5-6 there are some who at an early stage show linguistic difficulties and who will, later on, also have reading difficulties which cannot always be remedied neither in the ordinary education nor by supplementary special education.

In some cases there seems to be only a limited contact in the homes of these children between children and adults. Moreover, a few of the parents find it obvious that the more specific responsibility for the intellectual development of the children, including their reading development, rests with the school and/or the 'society'.

Some people would say that the adults of such homes "shirk the responsibility for the children and pass it on to the school on grounds of lack of time" - others maintain that new family structures often seem to be quite a strain to all the persons of the family, including the children (Jansen & Kreiner, 1985).

In every event, the above indicates the necessity of encouraging the parents to spend as much time as possible together with their children, with special reference to their language development.

It appears that the reading aloud of the adults to the children (often at bedtime) cannot be overestimated (Allerup et al., 1987). The last-mentioned report indicates that both the adults' and the small children's use of the library seems to be a fair indicator of the reading competence of the children.

What can be done
- for the children?

In connections like the above mentioned, the obvious question is, "What is the cause for what?".

No doubt, a library arrangement like e.g. itinerant library, mobile library, family sections in the library, no distinct division between children's library and adult library, etc. must be encouraged. Taken separately, these activities are only details. However, they form parts of greater wholes which put together are extremely important for the later reading competence of the individual children and thus also for the question of "functional illiteracy".

In school the textbooks must in general be expanded by "taped books" in order that the weakest readers at the middle stages in school do not lose the possibility of getting started with reading. This will also benefit the groups of immigrants, etc.

Generally ample supplies of materials must be provided for the school and children's library, primarily and especially including books which the pupils will be able to read by themselves, perhaps with support by "taped books". Such a structuralization of the materials seems necessary in order to keep down the functional illiteracy as much as possible.

The best readers among the children have ample access to a very wide selection of literature. The weaker part of the group of readers has a relatively wide choice - seen in an international connection.

However, this "international connection" represents no particular support for the reading disabled Danish pupil who experiences time and again that he/she has only one choice of book about a subject, whereas the classmates who read better have a choice of 10-20 books about the same subject.

There is every indication that the schools must be encouraged to give the pupils time to read in school.

Further, it must be expected that it will be still more necessary to give instruction specifically in reading - certainly also to children after the beginning grades at the age of 7-9, when, according to tradition, the actual reading instruction is discontinued in Denmark.

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A condition for being able to encourage a linguistically weakly equipped group to make use of the social offers when it comes to books, e.g. the availability of books at schools and public libraries, is that there is in fact a broad selection of literary books and subject material corresponding to the qualitifcatio of these readers.

The development pf literature for the disabled readers - which is after all modest (Jansen, 1983) - illustrates that even if many efforts combine in working towards the same aim, they are only just on their way. And with a problem like "functional illiteracy" - which develops concretely and constantly concurrently with the rising expectations of the surrounding world - they are almost bound to be "always just in their way".

However, this is, of course, better than simply ignoring the problem.

In this connection it ought to be mentioned that it will be necessary for the libraries to be able to offer literature to the immigrants and refugees in their own languages - both to the children, the young people, and the adults.

For some groups this will be Utopia - but at least all efforts must be mobilized in order to consider the interests of as many persons and groups as possible.

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Some 'immigrant' children are born and grown up in Denmark, but in an environment which has not been very open towards the surrounding Danish society. In their surroundings there has been no tradition of stimulating their linguistic, conceptual, and general intellectual development by means of books, toys, tools for writing and drawing, etc. Naturally, this has consequences for the development of the children; it has to be different from the development of the Danish children among which they grow up.

In all these environments there is not either a tradition to go on an outing, etc. together with the children, a.o. in order to teach them a little about the different sides of the society.

Inevitably these facts mean that the children from relatively closed environments may meet with great difficulties when they start school with a very limited knowledge of Danish (in a few cases even with none at all) and with a rather weak knowledge in their mother tongue. Their linguistic and conceptual development is remarkably different from that of their future classmates. Occasionally their motor skill is relatively poorly developed, and in many cases they are not used to be a social part of a group of children in the same way as the rest of the children.

The fact that in some instances their mother is a "functional illiterate", sometimes an illiterate, does not make the children's difficulties in joining the general education of the school any smaller.

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Moreover, it should be underlined that in those cases where the immigrant home has a relatively high (or very high) level of edution, the fact that another language than Danish is spoken in the home seldom seems to create problems.

In children from such intellectually stimulated environments a well-developed, active bilingualism can be observed which often seems to be advantageous for the children.

It is difficult to ignore that the educational level of the home seems to have a very essential influence on the progress (or failure) of the children in school and on the process of integration as such.

The functional illiterates
- and the young

It is noticeable that the "high school" students in Denmark have many - and as a matter of course: broad - offers for reading material to support their reading competence.

On the other hand, the "middle group" of pupils has a much smaller choice of books during their training - and they work considerably less with reading.

The weakest readers among the young who really need to have their reading competence improved, largely have only a few offers for reading material during their youth. And often they are not motivated to make use of the choice they do have, because these books seldom correspondend to the interests and reading qualifications of the young.

If (when) the social expectations on the reading competence of all citizens increase, exactly this last group of young will probably include a good deal of functional illiterates.

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It is remarkable that the good readers in Denmark are found among:

1: the highly educated adults,
2: the "high school" youth, and
3: abt. 70-80% of the group of children.

In the group of young there are proportionately more with a weak reading competence than in the group of children.

If a slow, but continuous growth in the number of functional illiterates is not acceptable, initiatives will have to be considered in order to support and guide the production and distribution of books; especially the libraries and the out-of-school education must direct their aim at the interests and qualifications of the young to a far greater extent than now.

At present the following can rightly be said:

"The children in Denmark have learned to read
better than any previous generation.
They also read more than previously,
and they read more books on a voluntary basis.
A very large part of the children are able to acquire
knowledge through reading from the age of 11,
to a much higher degree
than was the case for their parents' generation."

However, in the group of young there are reading problems, and among the adults it is more and more obvious that a group, which relatively become poorer readers, are being cut off.

The number of disabled readers must be expected to grow,
and among them there will surely
be functional illiterates,
presumably also in increasing numbers.

The functional illiterates - and the books

Compared with the size of the population, there is a large supply of books, newspapers, and journals in Denmark which reflects the importance attached to this fact.

On this background it gives cause for worry that the public offering via the libraries is strongly diminishing. During the latest 5-year period accounted for (1980-85) the book purchase of the public sector as a percentage of the total net sales of books has dropped from 44 to 35.

A calculation of the net sales of books to libraries and schools (compared with a similar calculation of books sold to private persons) during the same period shows that the total sales to libraries and schools has increased from D.kr. 332 million to D.kr. 366 million; however, in the same period the price index of books increased from 100 to 165! In other words, a rather drastic drop has taken place. - Similarly, the private book purchase has increased from D.kr. 420 million to D.kr. 691 million (Krustrup, 1987).

However, instead of looking further at numerical statements, it is - exactly in connection with a description of facts concerning the functional illiterates - obvious to look at the structure of the individual book, and whether it takes the weaker reader into consideration, in various ways.

The traditional structuralization of books and other texts falls in three parts:

The content of the text is obviously the central issue. This is true, whether fiction or non-fiction, lyric poets or computer science. The content of the book is the central issue - both to the very competent reader and to the much less competent reader.

The content of books and texts is not to be made the subject of discussion in this connection, since, in principle, books must be an offering sustained by interest, irrespective of the reading competence of the persons for whom the books are meant.

There are, however, two other important factors in relation to the functional illiterates and in relation to the disabled readers:

"The visual language of the texts" - i.e. the readability, the graphical, illustrative form and the design of the texts (Jakobsen, 1987).

The material meant for young and adults who are not particularly good or interested readers is not always prepared in such a way that it appeals to the reader.

Considering the growth in the group of functional illiterates it must give reason for concern that "newsstand literature" is often presented in a better way visually than is much of the teaching material used in the out-of-school education and the adult education (Dalby et al., in preparation; Jansen, 1984; 1985).

The language and concepts of the texts are the third facet of the presentation of the books. The concepts are the basis on which

to be read,
to be taught and
to be learned.

The concepts are given - in the same way as the content. They must not be thinned out of consideration for the disabled readers and the functional illiterates.

However, the language of the text must be adapted so as to make the principally identical concepts accessible - also to the weaker readers. In any case, the language can be accessible, difficult, short, long unequivocal, ambiguous, exciting, arid, etc. - all according to what is needed in the text in question.

Still, sometimes the language of the material meant for the total population is unacceptable - difficult, inaccessible, perhaps even incomprehensible.

The departmental style of a past time is strongly on the decline (Skårup, 1983). However, surveys of the linguistic accessibility of the printed material from the public sector to the population show that even if efforts are made to render the texts accessible, much of the public language is still largely incomprehensible to the majority of the citizens - and certainly not only to the functional illiterates (Møller & Hansen, 1981).

Is a Danish effort realistic?

If a Danish programme for "The Fight Against Functional Illiteracy" is to be outlined, it must be done carefully in order to preserve the reliability towards the other readers in Denmark - and the Danish tradition.

It is hardly reasonable to bring the general reading education in school into focus. Generally, that work is sound and effective.

The circumstance that children in Denmark start reading relatively late should not be altered. On the other hand, when the pupils reach the age of 11, the reading differences in the individual class have often become so extensive that in the long run it will hardly beavoidable to take special steps to the aid of the weakest readers.

Yet the most worrying thing is that the difference between the large group of good readers and the few (but still too many) weak readers is growing.

A survey of the reading development and the necessary prerequisites of it - from the years of the early childhood to the extreme old age - point out seven fields of problems:

1: According to the reading research as well as to the developmental-psychological research it is not, on the long view, useful for pupils with some or many linguistic difficulties or with a late linguistic development to start the reading education at an early stage.

This is also in compliance with what experience shows in this country.

On the other hand, in some cases during the early childhood it is extremely useful for the children to acquire a broad linguistic training based on verbalism (Elkind, 1986). The broader and stabler concepts the children have when starting school, the more pleased they are, and the more rewardingly and easily will they learn to read.

The first effort against functional illiteracy must take place during the early years when language and concepts are developed, and when the wish for and confidence towards learning have already become established to a higher degree than usually recognized in school.

2: The ordinary beginning instruction ought to attach importance to a reading instruction based on a well-organized and systematic methodology and utilizing many different angles of approach to the reading possibilities of the pupils - according to the qualifications of the individual pupil.

It has become a matter of course that also the teachers's knowledge of reading - and preferably the teacher's engagement in preparation of the children's 'own texts' together with the children - are important factors for the beginning instruction in reading.

There is a risk that a one-sided or early reading instruction will give genial soil for a later functional illiteracy.

3: The reading must, as early as possible, offer experience and knowledge to the individual pupil. This is also essential for the pupils at the middle stages of the school (the 9-12-year-olds). Also systematics in the education are essential, even if the best pupils - who, to a smaller or greater extent, are able to "read in order to learn" - can do without.

Lack of systematics as well as lack of experiences in the reading education at the middle stage in school often present a strain to the linguistically most weakly developed pupils who still have linguistic problems and reading difficulties.

4: Towards pupils at the middle stage in school it seems to be decisively necessary to take special measures, perhaps periodical activities like courses aimed at the weakest readers as well as at the group of fairly good readers.

The fact that the good readers also benefit from such 'reading courses for the whole class' (Lau et al., 1982; Mikkelsen & Moltke-Leth, 1982) is just a further incentive to use them (The Ministry of Education, 1987).

The only obstacles for such a promotion of the efficiency of the reading instruction are the in-service training of the teachers, too few materials in school, and a too small development of the school and children's library.

However, these conditions also form part of the genial soil for factors which might - exactly at the middle stage in school - lead some pupils into the group of functional illiterates.

5: The weak development of the reading education in subjects as geography, biology, history (= social and natural science) is relatively concerning, when viewing the matter on a longer perspective. It is alarming if the children have not as half-big children become accustomed to reading and using literature of non-fiction.

The research of the Danish National Institute for Educational Research in connection with the preparation of new reading testing texts has substantiated this in a most direct way (Jansen et al., 1987).

Just now, the pupils read more books of non-fiction outside the auspices of the school than in school (Hors & Jensen, 1983). This is a greater compliment to the children and their homes than to the school and the teachers in the 'subjects'. Incidentally it illustrates the lack of routine of the school in teaching the weaker and the weakest readers to use reading.

It also rather clearly points further on towards problems created for some children who will later be led towards or into the 'group of functional illiterates'.

6: In the out-of-school education an effort seems to be more necessary than during the years of childhood - the more so, the less reading competence in the pupils in question.

This is a well-defined age group where a - sizeably manageable, but threatened - group of pupils run the risk of being left out of the general social development, on a somewhat longer sight. The society will probably have only limited use for young people who are unable to read with comprehension - and to these young persons the lack of reading competence is a serious strain, not only in relation to their occupation, but also in relation to their surroundings on the whole.

The threats of the functional illiteracy towards a group of young people and to their further assimilation into the society could very well become a greater reality - also numerically - than is expected at present.

7: The adult education is in all probability generally so well-developed - and evening schools, folk high schools, summer courses, etc. so well-functioning - that solutions to the reading problems which the adults will report, can be offered.

Whether this will also the practicable in the future is an open question, since a larger number of persons with problems of this kind is likely to develop.

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The 'actual' groups of illiterates have already been described. Nobody would dare to refuse to give help to these groups, if they were to ask for it themselves; the great problem is how to reach these groups.

To the society the even far larger - and growing - group of functional illiterates presents a much more serious matter.

And so it does to the involved persons themselves.

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ANNEX III : SPAIN

A. ORGANIZATION OF THE SPANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

The current education system was set up by the General Law on Education adopted in 1970.

Schooling is compulsory from 6 to 14 years of age. This level, elementary general education, is known as Education General Basica (EGB) and its basic aims are as follows :

- to teach pupils to exercise the rights and respect the obligations of citizenship, democratic freedom and basic human rights ;
- to acquire, develop and put into practice learning habits and techniques;
- to exercise the skills of imagination, observation and thought;
- to introduce pupils to esthetic and artistic appreciation and expression;
- to develop physical and sporting abilities.

For the purposes of planning, assessment and promotion of the pupils, elementary general education is organized in two phases. The first is divided into two stages (Stage 1 from 6-8 years and Stage 2 from 8-11 years) and has a more global nature in so far as the subjects in each phase are taught by the same teacher. The second phase, Stage 3, covers the last three years of compulsory schooling.

On completion of elementary general education, the lower secondary leaving certificate is granted and this entitles pupils who have been successful in their studies to enter upper secondary school. Those who do not obtain the above certificate are awarded the school attendance certificate which entitles pupils to enter level 1 of vocational education.

The government offers free places for nursery school education and, although this level is not compulsory, almost all five year olds may be said to be attending school (state and private education).

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B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

At the level of elementary general education, 100 % of the population is receiving an education. Nearly all the pupils complete their schooling with at least a minimum level of reading ability. However, the statistics on low educational attainment lead us to suppose that a not inconsiderable percentage of people will later become functionally illiterate and that it will be necessary to run specific programme for them in the context of adult education.

C. ACTION TO COMBAT ILLITERACY

I. Adaptation of tuition with a view to overcoming the difficulties of the more disadvantaged pupils

The problems experienced by the more disadvantaged pupils in the educational field correlate with reading difficulties. Accordingly, to adapt the teaching to overcome these difficulties supposes, on the one hand, adapting the curricula and, more especially, the learning of reading and writing by giving preference to the required methodological approach and, on the other hand, various teacher training measures, school organization, the provision of human and material resources, etc..

The initiatives adopted in these fields are described below.

CURRICULUM

In the 1985-86 school year, an experimental plan was introduced to amend the curriculum in elementary general education (Stage 1 and Stage 2) involving schools of various types (urban, rural, state and private).

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The following are the relevant features of this experimental plan :

1. It takes the form of an open curriculum which allows for adaptation to social circumstances and similarly makes it possible to implement special plans for prevention and development in the most problematic areas.

2. Reading is seen as :

   - a comprehensive activity (not merely as a means of codification);
   - a continuously evolving learning situation which does not end in the early years of primary education;
   - a cultural process;
   - a cognitive process of a complex nature.

3. The teacher is given guidelines to approach learning in such a way that the pupil discovers its objective ;

4. The implementation is encouraged of immediate measures aimed at resolving problems detected in the course of learning to read and write as soon as they are encountered ;

5. The intention is to formulate some objectives which can be attained by nearly all pupils;

6. Individualized tuition of reading and writing is encouraged;

7. The use of class and school libraries is promoted;

8. The parents and other social groups are encouraged to play an active role.

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SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The Ministry of Education and Science, in documents addressed to the staff, promotes flexible organizational formulae which make it possible to form various groups of pupils according to the activities in which they are involved. These organizational solutions are expected to facilitate better and more individualized attention for pupils experiencing learning difficulties.

HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES

1. It is aimed to provide a remedial teacher to help work with pupils with the greatest difficulties in collaboration with the teachers of the lower classes.

2. In the more disadvantaged areas and social circles, plans for compensatory education have been put in practice to offset these problems in various ways :

   - in rural environments : centres for educational resources and pre-school provision in the home;
   - schemes for compensatory education in vocational training centres and elementary general education in disadvantaged areas ;
   - programmes for marginal young people;
   - schooling of marginal groups (mainly gipsies);
   - programme focussed on the itinerant population : seasonal workers, circus people, stallholders and hospital patients.

3. Creation and stocking of school libraries which should play an important role in promoting reading and at the same time provide a source of teaching material other than the textbook.

4. Expansion of the guidance temas who help to detect and diagnose learning difficulties.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES RELATING TO THE PUPILS' LINGUISTIC ABILITIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The development of the pupils' linguistic abilities means in primary education, reinforcing the communicative aspects of language, both oral and written.

At present, in school, the codifying aspects of reading and writing are given greater emphasis than the purely communicative activities. Very little is done to develop the intentional aspect of reading and writing and secondly, activities to develop the oral aspect of language are much neglected or are carried out in a very unsystematic and inadequate way.

The development of linguistic abilities is of undeniable social importance if we consider that it is in the more disadvantaged social classes that a great effort has to be made to overcome the difficulties, which, in general, pupils experience in this field, due to the lack of models and adequate cultural stimulus.

From all of this emerges the need to :

- offset social deficiencies with specific programmes for linguistic development, which have whatever resources are required to meet the shortcomings to be remedied;
- encourage the learning of the mother tongue by stepping up the activities which reinforce the pupils' oral skills;
- give priority to preventive measures :
  - . promote the reading of material appropriate to the level and interest of each pupil;
  - . tailor learning to the individual;
  - . promote the provision and use of class and central school libraries;
  - . establish a methodology appropriate to the pupils' needs which ensures comprehensive learning by means of activities centred on the utilitarian role of reading.

III. PREVENTION OF THE LOSS OF SKILLS

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

The training of teachers is the responsibility of the Ministry for Education and Science.

The Subdirectorate-General for Teacher Training is responsible for proposing and implementing in-service training and updating courses and schemes.

A Royal Decree (November 1984) regulates the creation and operation of "Centros de Profesores" (teachers' centres) as the preferred vehicle for providing in-service training and enhancing professional attitudes as well as for promoting the modernization of education and propagating educational experiments, all of which is aimed at improving the quality of teaching.

V. ADULT LITERACY

Adult literacy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, as is Adult Education in general. These responsibilities were all brought together under the Directorate-General for Educational Advancement in 1983. Since 1986 both come under the Subdirectorate-General for Adult Education.

In the 1984/85 school year, given the alarming data on illiteracy and, under the auspices of the Ministry for Education and Science, a literacy programme was set up with its own funds under the Royal Decree on Compensatory Measures (11 May 1983) with the intention of remedying the errors made in previous campaigns.

The literacy programme is based on the following general objectives :

- to be seen as an integral part of the development plan and to be linked to the education of the individual;

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- to utilize all the resources, both institutional and those of existing social groups (local authorities, cooperatives, trade unions, voluntary organizations, womens' associations, youth groups, etc..);
- to take account of the provincial and local social and cultural features and promote the involvement of the beneficiaries themselves in the programme;
- to use a teaching method based on the group's personal experience;
- to not confine itself in the learning process to the concepts of reading, writing and arithmetic but to aspire to a general culture;
- to ensure continuity by means of providing ongoing education so as not to frustrate the efforts made during the literacy campaign.

The criteria adopted for the selection of areas for action, given that it is impossible to establish the programme throughout the territory administered directly by the Ministry for Education, are as follows :

- geographical areas with a high rate of illiteracy;
- areas with experience of work in this field which make it possible to develop the programme efficiently;
- areas where no local initiatives have been taken and a compensatory policy needs to be implemented.

Background of the teaching staff

The teaching staff becomes involved in the literacy programme in one of two ways :

- some 15 % are civil servants working for the Ministry of Education and are primary school teachers without previous training in adult education and literacy training ;
- the remaining 85 % is a very complex group comprising professionals from various fields and in various administrative and work situations (on contract to local authorities or private institutions on a part-time basis, on grants, etc..) and these too lack specific training in this field.

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- voluntary workers under various social schemes are involved also on a one-off basis.

Provincial programmes : concertation and coordination

By means of specific budgetary appropriations, cooperation agreements are entered into with local authorities (Diputaciones and Ayuntamientos) (provincial and town councils) and private non-profit making institutions which make it possible to extend the scope of these activities, reinforce social coolaboration and at the same time made optimum use of both institutional and private resources.

In various provinces the literacy programme has resulted in significant collaboration although integral programmes remain an utopic vision.

In this way links were established with development agencies - the National Employment Office, the Office for Agricultural Reform and Development, National Office for the Social Services, Agricultural Development, Health - with local and provincial authorities - Diputaciones, Ayuntamientos Accion Social de Base, consejerias - and voluntary bodies - Caritas, Escuelas Campesinas, Asociaciones Culturales de Gitanos, etc..

This link has made it possible to work together with the teaching staff, to use material and human resources outside the educational framework and conduct various activities where necessary and requested by adults, making them viable and meeting genuine training needs.

Relationship with other Ministries

- An agreement was signed with the Ministry for Justice during the 1984-85 school year with the aim of improving educational provision for the illiterate prison population. Under this agreement not only are collaboration and exchange taking place between two different bodies of civil servants in a specific number of prisons but also in-service training schemes run by the Ministry of Education and Science are

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thrown open to teaching staff employed by the Ministry of Justice. Similarly, more appropriate teaching material for the tuition provided has been made more easily available.

- An agreement was signed with the Ministry of Culture during the 1985/86 school year with the aim of stimulating culturally depressed rural areas.

  In each area a team comprising five professionals from different spheres are working together with an adult training instructor whose job is to coordinate the whole training process.

- An agreement was made with the armed forces on the training of soldier-teachers responsible for literacy courses in their respective postings.

  An intensive course is being conducted on the methodology of literacy training which is complemented by twice monthly meetings for analysis reflection and the solving of day-to-day problems.

Surveys

During the 1985/86 shcool year two surveys were launched as follows :

- the coordination of the various social bodies and groups working with the adult population with a view to making full use of human and material resources and efforts ;
- the use of community development techniques in relation to literacy training.

Training of instructors

Given that the success of an educational programme is to a great extent ensured by those implementing it and not forgetting both the different professional backgrounds of the instructors in literacy training and also the training requirements to confront a new and multiple task, a training plan is being launched jointly by the Subdirectorate-General for Teacher Training and the Subdirectorate-General for Adult Education with the aim of establishing an ongoing system of training and updating for instructon

ANNEX IV : FRANCE

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE.

The French education system requires compulsory "teaching" rather than compulsory schooling from the age of 6 to 16, or from age 5 if parents so wish. There is a dual system of state and private schools, but the latter are all subject to a degree of state inspection. The law requires the "Mairie" to draw up lists of children of compulsory school age, who are required to be in school (except in the cases where parents have made arrangements for schooling to take place in the home). These lists are checked in the schools and if pupils are frequently absent then contact is made with the parents. Persistent absenteeism is sanctioned with an official request for family allowances to be withdrawn. In practice this sanction is not widely used as such allowances often represent the family's only income. The second sanction involves referring the matter to the courts. Again special measures exist for gypsies and migrants. Athough the vast majority of children go to school, increased poverty may mean that some especially disadvantaged children are not attending school.

B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

As in Belgium, Army statistics on illiterates gives some indication of the scale of the problem amongst young male conscripts. However, they do not differentiate between degrees of illiteracy. For that reason the Ministry of Defence is to provide the Education Ministry with a more detailed break-down of the problem, indicating that percentage which is totally illiterate and that which is only semi-literate. In the meantime, however, France is not waiting for figures before acting. Recent economic development have played a large part in stimulating awareness of the phenomenon of illiteracy in a considerable proportion of the adult population

in France. This phenomenon could be overlooked when most of the adult population found work, but the increase in unemployment early in the 1980's and the need to retrain manpower following recent technological changes has revealed gaps in the education of a large proportion of the population. These gaps are all the more serious in that they are an obstacle to integration or reintegration at work and thus constitute a factor of social marginalization. This observation led to general questioning of the effectiveness of the education system and in-depth consideration of the problem of school drop-outs.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO COMBAT ILLITERACY

I Teaching approaches

In this area , the campaing against illiteracy is closely connected to the efforts to reduce failure at school. The main measures taken at the various levels of education are the following.

1.Nursery school

Children are being gently prepared for learning at pre-school level, this is probably because children gradually acquire a number of habits and skills which facilitate their integration into primary school.

For this reason the Ministry is endeavouring to expand the capacity of nursery schools. The proportion of children adged 2 to 5 years attending nursery school has risen from 50 % in 1960 to 82 % in 1985. At present, all children aged 4-5 years are admitted and over 90 % of 3-year olds.

Recent ministerial instructions issued in 1986 stress the importance of every form of preparatory activity for basic

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education.

2.Primary school

The 1985 programmes and instructions stress the vital aspect of learning the written language. Teachers are invited to diversify their tuition in accordance with the children's abilities. To this end, they are asked to evaluate the pupils'progress and difficulties at regular intervals to provice individual support, if needed, at an earlier age.

Since 1984 the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Social Action Fund have provided financial incentives to local authorities to encourage them to set up libraries and documentation centres in schools. These libraries enable the children to become familiar with the variety of written works and gradually discover the pleasure of reading. They are linked to local libraries and are open to parents who may thus join in their children's reading activities.

3.Lower secondary school

Since 1977, lower secondary schools have admitted all pupils from primary schools without distinction or streaming. To meet the needs of the heterogeneous educational level of these pupils the Ministry set up a lower secondary school reform plan. Every establishment must draw up an education plan adapted to its pupi and laying douw procedures for differentiated teaching in accordance with the pupils' individual needs.

New programmes distributed in 1985 emphasize the teaching of the written language and invite teachers of all subjects to pay particular attention to this fundamental aspect.

4.Upper secondary school

The main effort is aimed, where possible at preventing young people from leaving the education system without a diploma or qualification. A circular of 30 May 1986 requires every upper secondary teaching establishment to set up a mechanism whereby each pupil will receive assistance in guidance or seeking a job as well as extra tuition adapted to their individual needs.

These directives apply to all establishments, especially intermediate vocational schools, where teaching teams have fore some years devoted considerable effort to developing special teaching methods for pupils with difficulties.

These are the main measures implemented at each level of education. A more general measure concerning all establishments of whatever level should be mentioned : the definition of educational priority areas.

The policy of educational priority areas, launched in 1982, entai the definition of areas with a high proportion of children in difficulties, and directs a special effort towards improving the quality of teaching in establishments in these areas. This mainly has affected the number of teaching posts, the organization of training courses, development of libraries, and the preparation of educational projects associating teachers and outside partners (parents, social workers, elected representatives, members of associations).

With particular reference to the campaign against illiteracy, the Education Ministry sent a circular letter to all schools spelling out details of the fight against illiteracy. It stressed the importance of prevention rather than cure and suggested that the best way to fight the problem was to attack it at source. It also stressed the need for differentiated teaching approaches, the importance of helping pupils to acquire, at their own pace, the skills of reading and writting and the need for continuous monitoring once the skills have

been acquired, and the role to be played by library/documentation centres.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

The primary school curriculum is undergoing a review which will result in more emphasis being placed on mother tongue training and on reading and writing. Children will also be encouraged to read books which have some practical use, some direct link with their everyday lives.

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

The 60 000 pupils who do not stay on at school beyond the school-leaving age are being encouraged to come back, and within schools the national system of documentation centres (mentioned at I(3) above) is designed to prevent loss of reading skills in young people.

As far as the schools system is concerned, a programme for the development of library / documentation centre facilities was established two years ago. This is financed jointly by the Education and Cultures Ministries and the Social Action Fund. The central government funding is intended as a contribution towards stat-up expenditure. Thereafter the local authorities take over. The main categories of school affected are nursery schools primary schools and intermediate vocational secondary schools.

District and municipal libraries and bookshops are also active in this area. At the adult education level, literacy campaigns are organised by the Vocational Training and Culture Ministries.

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Nevertheless, the inadequacy of the results cannot but be deplored. Integration and retraining programmes have been organized for unemployed young people by Vocational Training Ministry.

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

The reform of teacher training mainly applied to primary school teachers, whose initial period of training was extended to four years of study following the Baccalaureate (2 years of university training and 2 years of vocational training).

However, significant resources were also released to develop continuing training, especially of secondary school teachers.

V. ADULT ILLITERACY

Adult literacy is not the responsibility of the Education Ministry, but rather of the Culture and Training Ministries.

Following the Cabinet meeting on 11 january 1984, an inter-ministerial Standing Group to Combat Illiteracy was esthablished. This Group was officially set up on 2 October 1984 by the Ministry for Social Affairs and National solidarity, with a Member of Parliament in the chair. It includes representatives from 16 Ministries and State Secretariats, five national bodies and five associations prominent in the field of action to combat illiteracy.

Creation of this group reflects the French Government's desire to deal with the problem of adult illiteracy on a general level by associating all the institutional bodies or associations concerned. It is indeed a general social problem, exceeding the single area of competence and responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

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The Group's brief is essentially threefold :

- to support and develop existing initiatives ;
- to integrate action against illiteracy with more general operations concerning the social and occupational integration of young people, vocational training, reading development and the dissemination of information ;
- to develop research in this as yet poorly understood field.

The small operational team of flexible composition under the responsibility of the Ministry for Social Affairs and National Solidarity meets regularly to promote and coordinate a range of measures aimed at achieving the objectives set out above.

The main lines of action are as follows :

- Information on local initiatives

A questionnaire has been distributed widely with a view to obtaining a clearer picture as regards the location and mechanics of initiatives currently under way.

- Establishment of a network for the exchange and circulation of information

The standing Group has established a journal which publishes useful information of national (or even international) and local origin.

In addition, three regional seminars will be held this autumn to provide an opportunity to meet and discuss the problems of literacy training.

- Action to increase awareness on the part of government departments and local authorities regarding the problems of illiteracy and the need for preventive and corrective measures.

As regards central government departments, substantial progress has been achieved by means of circulars issued by the Ministry of Education and the National Family Allowances Fund, instructions issued by the Regional Directorates for Corrective Education and information meetings for staff at local offices of the Culture and Social Affairs Ministries.
A corespondent for the Standing Group has been appointed within the administration of each department.

As far as local authorities are concerned, the regional seminars mentioned above are used as an opportunity for increasing awareness, as are articles appearing in the press on the occasion of these seminars.

-Coordination of initiatives at regional level

The projects to be implemented will take various forms and must meet the requirements of highly diverse geographical and social situations (rural areas, urban or suburban areas, travel-to-work areas suffering the effects of restructuring, etc...). Agreements between the central government and regional authorities are currently being drafted for Haute Normandie and Picardie and have already been signed for Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Réunion.

-Training of literacy teachers

The operational team has looked at the question of ways and means of organizing such training and produced a preliminary working paper on the subject.

In a circular dated 11 February 1985, the Ministry of Education called on regional and district education officers to participate

in the training of literacy teachers by identifying competent teacher-trainers, opening up courses for teachers to people outside the profession, placing competent teacher-trainers at the disposal of associations involved in literacy teaching and contributing to the design and production of suitable teaching materials.

Other bodies are also involved in the training of literacy teachers, notably the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of National Solidarity and the National Family Allowances Fund.

-Research

An inventory and critical review of existing research on illiteracy and reading problems is plannec for 1985. There are also plans for the launching of a number of action-research projects linked to experimental schemes under way "in the field"

Programme contract will be drawn up jointly by several ministries. One of the main priorities under the resulting research programme might be the origins of illiteracy.

It should be noted that the Standing Group organized a round table on the fight against illiteracy in the context of the International Conference on Adult Education. This round table was held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 26.3.85 and provided an opportunity to develop contacts with a large number of foreign delegations in the hope of bringing into being lasting arrangements for international exchanges (notably as regards research findings).

Adress of the Standing Group : to combat illiteracy :

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Pièce 4140 A
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VI. DISTANCE LEARNING

To date this method has not been used for literacy teaching. There is, however, currently some debate on how it might be adapted for htis purpose.

As matters Stand, the National centre for Distance Education does not reach illiterates. There are plans to use television as a means of reaching a wider audience.

CONCLUSION

The French Government is therefore fully aware that despite a century of compulsory education, there remains a proportion of the adult population which has not acquired sufficient mastery of the written language to adapt effectively to the new demands of a changing society. To improve the situation, steps must betaken to improve the performance of the education system in providing a high standard of education for all pupils. Measures have been taken to this effect. Their implementation at all levels presupposes time for experimentation, changes in rooted attitudes and changes in training.

Whatever present or future progress may be achieved within the education system, for a number of reasons there will continue to be a proportion of pupils who will not benefit from their time at school. There will also be a proportion of adults who, for lack of practice in reading and writing after leaving school, will lose a large part of the skills acquired at school. For this reason the policy to combat illiteracy must not be limited to problem of failure at school but must be extended to include adult education. Besides vocational and skilled training, the range of courses offered must include learning, relearning and reinforcing basic education. Provision should also be made for more widespread dissemination of culture in the population as a whole. The latter aims could be the most difficult to achieve.

ANNEX V : GREECE

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

Attendance at primary school has been obligatory since 1834. The relevant legislation provides for the imposition of fines on parents who fail to send their children to school.

Almost 100 years later, however, in 1929, the number of illiterates exceeded 40 % of the population and only around 70 % of all school-age children were enrolled in primary schools.

In 1954, legislative Decree No 3094 provided for both administrative sanctions (fines) and penal sanctions (Penal Code) for parents or guardians of children of school age not attending a primary school.

These sanctions also affect parents or guardians of young people aged 14 to 20 not in possession of a primary school leaving certificate and not attending evening classes.

Under the 1975 Constitution obligatory schooling should last at least nine years. Law No 309 of 1976 "on the organization and administration of general education" laid down nine-year compulsory education (six years in primary school and three years in a "gymnasion" or lower secondary school.

From 1981 onwards primary school children have been promoted automatical to the next class at the end of a school year and lower secondary school (gymnasion) entrance examinations for primary school children have now been abolished.

Nevertheless, a considerable number of pupils drop out of school between primary and lower secondary school and a much bigger percentage drop out of school without completing lower secondary school.

So in spite of all the administrative and penal sanctions laid down by law, a certain percentage of pupils, most of whom come from rural and working class backgrounds and attend small schools in small communities or schools with very large classes in deprived urban areas still drop out of compulsory schooling.

For the record, the breakdown of Greek primary schools by number of teachers is as follows :

	no. of schools
(a) one teacher :	3.585
(b) two teachers :	2.119
(c) three teachers :	848
(d) four teachers :	382
(e) five teachers :	215
(f) six or more teachers :	2.283
Total :	9.432

Source : National Statistical Office of Greece (ESYE), 1982

Out of a total enrolment of 850 042, some 70 000 pupils attend primary schools with only one teacher and around 90 000 attend primary schools with just two teachers. In other words, 19 % of all primary pupils attend schools with one or two teachers. This figure is more than twice as high in rural areas.

The table below shows the number of hours of instruction given in the six years of the primary school. The number varies according to the type of school.

School	Year					
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
One teacher	175	175	210	240	270	270
Two teachers	335	335	380	435	450	450
Three teachers	450	450	550	550	710	710
Four teachers	450	450	725	725	710	710
Five teachers	450	450	725	725	725	725
Six teachers	670	670	725	725	725	725

B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

The 1981 census figures show that there are 706 721 illiterates in Greece, i.e. 8.6 % of the population aged ten years and over. The figure for semi-literates is 1 281 839 or 15.6 % of those aged ten and over.

The number of illiterate and semi-literate persons in Greece therefore exceeds 24 % of the population aged ten years and over. It is true that most illiterates are elderly people, but even if we stick to the fifteen to sixty-four age group the figure is still as high as 20 %.

The problem of illiteracy is greater among women : 30 % of girls and women aged ten and over are illiterate or semi-literate. The problem is particularly acute among women workers ; according to the OAED "Employm and Manpower Office" there are four times as many illiterate female workers as male workers.

In rural areas 36 % of the population aged ten years and over is illiterate The corresponding figure for women is as high as 45 % . So illiteracy quite clearly constitutes a major hurdle to local development and the cooperative organization of agricultural production, etc..

But total illiterates are more numerous than semi-literates, as 19 % of pupils in elementary education attend schools with only one or two teachers and these establishments are to be found in small, isolated mountain settlements. As a result of their deprived social and cultural environment and the inadequacy of their schooling, primary school leaving certificates awarded to such children never attest to adequate reading and writing ability.

Total illiteracy is particularly prevalent among groups such as gypsies, who cannot send their children to primary school, either because they have no permanent abode, or because they and their families move from one locality to another in search of seasonal work.

Illiteracy is also a problem among disabled children owing to the lack of teachers trained to teach them and to the general lack of special care of such pupils, who are often able to learn to read and write but remain illiterate simply because their teachers and parents lack the necessary teaching skills and information.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

I. TEACHING APPROACHES

The fight against illiteracy means first of all that all children aged 6 to 15 are assured regular education - reading, writing and arithmetic to a satifactory level during compulsay education - and that this is linked to every day life in order to prevent illiteracy return.

The following preventive measures have been or will be taken :

1. the new law 1566/85 on the "structure and functioning of primary and secondary education stipulates that
   (a) any person responsible for the care of a minor who fails to enrol the child at school or supervise his/her studies shall be liable to the sanctions provided for in Article 458 of the Penal Code;
   (b) pupils who live at some considerable distance from their school may be transported there free of charge or be accepted as a boarder without payment of fees;
   (c) special education for disabled children has been placed on an equa footing with the rest of the education system and, for the first time, in accordance with the aforementioned draft law, pyschologists and social workers have been assigned a specific role in special education;
   (d) the same draft law provides for free provision to disabled pupils of books, tape recorders, audio teaching aids and, for blind children, free text books in braille;

(e) steps are being taken to merge schools with one, two or three teachers and to provide the pupils with free transport to the integrated establishment ;

(f) the same draft law provides for links between schools and the outside world with the creation of prefectural education boards and local (municipal) education committees.

2. Priority has been given to improving the quality of primary schools by introducing new curricula and new text books for both pupils and teachers.

3. Primary and secondary education are provided free of charge by the State (text books are also provided).

4. Statutory provision has been made for reception classes and tutoring facilities for children of returning emigrants who are having adjustment problems at school.

5. In conjunction with the Ministry of Education and the Schools Councils, an additional teacher has been made available in fifty primary schools for the trial application of a tutoring programme to help pupils with serious problems in reading, writing and arithmetic. Those pupils taking part in the scheme have an extra hour of lessons every day.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVS FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

1. The new law mentioned above will place a duty on parents to ensure that their children receive compulsory education.

2. The Greek Army runs courses for new recruits who left school without completing their education. At present these courses are still at an experimental stage. Teaching materials have been devised and around a hundred literacy groups are currently in operation. The Greek authorities are thinking of collaborating with UNESCO in this field in the future.

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

Teacher training has been improved. Teacher training colleges offering courses lasting two years have been closed down and replaced by university-level education departments offering four-year courses.

V. ADULT LITERACY

In its efforts to combat illiteracy the General Secretariat for Popular Education (adult education) has drawn up a programme which was discussed and approved at a conference in october 1984. The participants included :

(a) Government departments and other bodies involved in the anti-illiteracy campaign (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Agriculture, Youth Department, Employment and Manpower Office, etc).

(b) Trade Unions etc., (GSEE (Greek Trade Union Congress), Council for Equality between the Sexes, Secondary Teachers' Union (OLME), etc..).

This programme leads to the creation of :

1. a coordinating committee;
2. a research group to study the extent of illiteracy and its repercussions on economic and social development;
3. a working party on the productionof educational material for illiterate adults;
4. experimental adult illiteracy departments, which will investigate the problems involved before the programme is extended throughout the country.

Preventing and tackling adult illiteracy is a social, socio-cultural and political problem which is exacerbated by a lack of funds, experience and appropriate educational material for the various categories of illiterate people. What is more, Greece is going through a period of rapid changes affecting its institutions, the economy and society at large which necessitate raising the level of education and, a fortiori, the eradication of illiteracy to facilitate the development of modern methods of organizing productio-, particularly in agriculture, throughout the country and the introduction of innovations in various sectors of the economy.

VI. DISTANCE LEARNING

There is as yet no distant learning material for dealing with illiteracy, but about 100 groups have been set up to develop literacy courses. The aim is to establish newt year distance learning courses in collaboration with the Greek universities.

ANNEX VI : IRELAND

IRELAND

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

The primary school system dates from 1831. School attendance, embodied in the School Attendance Act, is compulsory between the ages of 6 to 15, and attendance is optional from the age of 4. The School Attendance Act is enforced by committees or by the police. School authorities inform the enforcement bodies if children do not attend, and they are brought to the attention of the courts. Prosecutions however are rare. Children are often irregular in attendance, especially where they are required to help out in the home. In these cases, action taken against them is rarely effective.

As far as standards of scholastic achievement are concerned inspectors are employed by the Ministry of Education to monitor standards of education in the schools. This should, theoretically, ensure uniform standards, but there are problems concerning poor motivation, notably in the inner-cities, where attendance may be as low as 60-65 %.

B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

There is no statistical data available to quantify the scale of the problem accurately. Illiterates tend not to seek help, and for that reason corrective action is almost impossible. The migrant/immigrant population is small, and the greatest number of illiterates exist within the poorest sections of the indigenous population. Studies suggest that the formative, pre-school years are crucial (differences of ability between pupils were marked at age 10, but were also significant among the same children at age 3), suggesting that it is not simply a question of solving the problem at school, but also looking at it outside school, in the family for example.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

I. TEACHING APPROACHES

Measures already undertaken within schools include the reduction of class size (despite the lack of evidence to suggest that pupils in small classes perform better than pupils in large classes), remedial teaching by withdrawal, and special class units for children ins serious difficulty.

New technologies are likely to have an increasing impact on schools, because pupils will have ready access to sources of knowledge other than the teacher. In Dublin, where a project recognising the importance of school/family links has been carried out, teachers went to their pupil's home to offer extra assistance against a family background. This was seen to have a positive effect on parent motivation.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE COMPETEN

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

There are no specific initiatives in Ireland which are designed to prevent the loss of skills , and the emphasis tends to focus instead on people who fail to acquire literacy competencies. Trade unions and farmers unions do arrange courses for their members, but this is at their own initiative.

Both ordinary and mobile libraries are to be found in Ireland. Irish radio devotes a proportion of its air time to educational broadcasts. Plans have been laid before Parliament which would ensure that local stations also devoted some time to educational broadcasting. Certain sectoral organize educational activities for their members (trade unions, farmers unions, etc.), especially in rural areas.

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

Teacher training courses have been extended from 2 to 3 years, and entrants to the profession generally have either a University degree in Education or a University degree in some other subject, plus a one year higher diploma in Education. In-service training is voluntary and only a small minority of teachers participate. Such courses as do exist tend to be good, but resources are lacing and the number of courses is too small.

V. ADULT LITERACY

Central Government has recently, for the first time, allocated 1 million for adult literacy provision. It will be distributed to local communities through local adult education boards which have been set up to deal with the problem locally. There are currently some 50 literacy schemes in operation, involving some 3000 adults. Tuition is carried out on the basis of one tutor for each adult learner. Of those who participate, many are poor and most have little control over their lives. However, if, as has been suggested, there may ba as many as 100,000 adult illiterates in the country the present schemes are only reaching a small proportion of the target population. The authorities are therefore asking why the vast majority of illiterates are not coming forward. Is the model wrong ?

Is the individual approach wrong ? Or are people reluctant to admit their handicap, or even see their illiteracy as a handicap ?

The 38 adult education boards are responsible for literacy campaigns. They come under the Vocational Education Committees and a specific budget appropriation for the promotion of literacy was places at their disposal this year for the first time. This budget is intended to cover the period 1985-87. The National Adult Literacy Agency has laid down guidelines for literacy training.

VI. DISTANCE LEARNING

This is being developed, but is still in its early stages. Based in Dublin the Institute for Higher Education will concentrate on updating courses rather than on literacy work. The national radio and television networks have a conscious educational orientation, and in the pipeline is legislation which will establish local radio stations. Their broadcasting content has not yet been determined, but an educational element has been suggested in discussions.

ANNEX VII: ITALY

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOLS SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

State nursery school - 3 to 5 years
State primary school (local authorities or private)
State primary school - 6 to 11 years (attended by 80 % of pupils)
Non-State primary school (officially recognized or private) : attended by 20 % of pupils.
State lower secondary school - 11 to 14 years (the attendance rate is the same in State and non-State schools).

The educationist's definition of basic education includes three stages : nursery, primary and lower secondary. In terms of legislation, compulsory education covers primary and lower secondary school.

At present, the only parts of the country where it is difficult to ensure attendance at compulsory school are in the Naples area and certain areas in the south and the islands. The problem is almost resolved in the centre and north. There are a few residual problems in the case of pupils who are children of migrants from the south (to a lesser extent today).

In the past, absence from school or irregular attendance set in motion a procedure leading to a fine payable by those exercising parental responsibility. Until 1974, this procedure was initiated by the school inspectors nowadays by the heads of primary or lower secondary schools.

In recent years, apart from legislation, the Regions have introduced measures to support the right to education (Provvidenze per il diritto allo studio) : free books and exercise books, free transport, individual and classroom educational aids, school meals, teams of social, psychological and educational experts, etc...

Not only has pupil wastage been reduced, but in 1978 children with slight and serious handicaps were integrated into the school system. This created a number of problems, not all of which have yet been solved (lack of "ad hoc" remedial teachers, links with rehabilitation experts in the area, and social, psychological and educational teams).

The pupil's personal record (used for the difficult task of assessing pupil behaviour and learning ability) has drawn attention to the problem of failure and the need to repeat years. Before a pupil can be failed it must be shown that every possible effort has been made from the educational and psychological point of view, including family involvement in the specific circumstances of the school; a written report must be drawn up and approved at a meeting of the class council (lower secondary school) or inter-class council (primary school), at which only the teachers are present.

Since 1974 the organization of school collegiate bodies (class and inter-class councils, teaching staff assembly and group council) has stimulated parents' interest in the life and organization of the school, in learning problems and the success rate. Although decisions regarding promotion or staying down rest entirely with the teachers, parents can discuss their children's problems individually with teachers or at meetings of collegiate bodies and class assemblies. Despite its limitations, the system of parent participation in the life and administration of the school, at least in compulsory education, has given positive results.

The new lower secondary (1979) and primary school (1985) programmes tend to make education more effective and consequently reduce pupil wastage.

Parliament is currently discussing a law on the reform of upper secondary school, which includes provision for the extension of compulsory education to the age of 16 (bringing it to ten years).

Current efforts to reinforce the organization of nursery school education and enrich its didactic content (including gradual extension to about 95 % of 3 to 5 years-olds) will have positive repercussions on attendance and success rates in compulsory education. It is important to support pupils in the transition from nursery to primary and primary to lower secondary school. The worst cases of failure with the most negative consequences occur during the transition stages. Help for a pupil in practical terms means that teachers in all three levels - particularly the transition years- must compare notes and discuss the pupil's record.

Outline report

Part One - Introduction
Part Two - Description

ITALY

ISTAT and CENSIS statistical tables
Individual situations : Campania and Calabria, Lombardy.

Part Three - Improvements

Campaign against illiteracy
More careful analysis of the causes of illiteracy and measures to prevent illiteracy in various situations :

- the family
- nursery school
- primary school
- lower secondary school
- parallel and extracurricular activities
- youth associations
- transition from school to work
- projects for the general educational development of the community
- small centres with a declining population and suburbs of the large cities.

Particular importance is attached to the problem of the continuity of education between nursery, primary and lower secondary school (basic education, the last two constituting compulsory education). Much of the pupil wastage (repeating years, withdrawals, irregular attendance, slow learning) stems from pupils' deplorable aptitude for slipping through the successive stages of school calmly and without undue anxiety.
An effective strategy to comabt pupil wastage is outlined in the introduction and subjects included in the NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING PROGRAMMES, issued in 1985, to come into effect in the 1987/1988 school year.

Its main educational features are :

- laicization, pluralism, values of the republican constitution;
- decentralization, stress on the role of the family and other educational "agencies" in the area (outside school);
- basic reading and writing skills and emphasis on cognitive development;
- protection of individual diversity, social and legal equality;
- subjects : greater stress on languages and mathematics, introduction of new subjects (e.g. foreign languages, art appreciation, social studies); religion will be taught on request, in accordance with the revised agreement between the Holy See and the Italian State, agreements between the Waldenses and the Italian State, and agreements in preparation with other religious faiths practiced in Italy;
- continuity of culture, education and tuition between nursery, primary and lower secondary school (with particular attention to the problem of transition from one level to the next and one type of school to a other for all pupils, particularly those in difficulties or with handicaps : for the latter, the transition should be worked out and studied by the heads and teachers at both levels after obtaining the opinion of the team of social, psychological and educational experts and the parents of the pupils concerned).

Despite the current lively polemic about education, there is general agreement on the need to close the gap between primary and lower secondary school through the adjustment of the respective teaching programmes. There is particular emphasis on the need for programmes which will define the aims and specify the means to achieve them, while taking account of the expanded educational opportunities offered by the curriculum following the inclusion of new activities or the upgrading of traditional subjects.

A sharp reduction in pupil wastage is forecast together with an increase in the level of learning and overall maturity of the pupils' personality.

The concept of compulsory education is being transformed into the right to basic and continuing education, particularly in the north and centre of Italy. The south and the islands are still plagued by serious problems regarding school premises and organization.

Since 1978 the law has required the local authorities to provide what is known as educational aid, now termed the right to education, in combination with the provision of free or semi-free transport for pupils living far from school, from their homes to the school buildings, semi-free school meals, economic aids for particularly needy families, and a supply of teaching aids for schools.

In more active and efficient communities these provisions are combined with the organization of :

- guided tours
- school trips
- one-week exchanges with other schools
- camps.

At best this will inaugurate a positive knock-on effect for educational development : family, school, local authorities. At worst, the situation will remain negative.

In this connection, the findings of the research on behalf of the Campania IRRSAE were significant.

The following general assumptions were confirmed by field research : the educational processes in schools at compulsory level do not generally offset the conditions under which pupils enter schools, and in many cases there is no correlation between the marks obtained on admission and those obtained on leaving.

The following specific assumptions were also verified.

A. Causes associated with the family economic, social and cultural situation

- Pupil wastage is related to the low social status of the family.
- It is related to the low level of education of the family.
- It is related to areas where the social, economic and cultural level is low.
- It is related to families with large numbers of children.
- The likelihood of dropping out increases among children whose families do not have the economic resources to support their children at school.
- Wastage is likely to occur during compulsory education among children of families with limited cultural interests.
- In families affected by pupil wastage, inter-family communication is at a very low level.
- Drop-outs are more frequent in families distrustful of school in general and of teachers, education officers and social workers in particular.
- Drop-outs occur more frequently in families with little or no interest in the child's progress at school, no interest in promoting success or helping him with his studies.
- Pupils are more likely to drop out in families where the parents have low expectations regarding the educational success of their children at school.
- There is a higher rate of wastage in families living at subsistence level (house, job safety, minimum comfort). In their case, school is bracketed with the less urgent problems.

B. Causes associated with school

- There is little communication between children who drop out and teachers and, in general, it is limited to school matters.
- In communication between drop-outs and teachers, personal and social problems related to their life experience are ignored.

112

- A record of irregular attendance at school (years repeated, slow learning) and withdrawals are closely related.

- Wastage is higher where teachers use traditional teaching methods and adopt a selective approach to education (learning/teaching methods are standardized and based on one specific type of student).

- Wastage is higher where the subject or subjects proposed arouse no interest in the pupils.

- Wastage is higher where the teaching and textbooks used in the school diverge widely from experience of disadvantaged chiloren and/or children in difficulties.

- Wastage is higher in schools lacking structures and equipment.

- Wastage is higher in schools offering fewer opportunities to make up for absence in particular when the school fails to take corrective measures to avoid repeating years and prevent poor attendance or final withdrawal.

- Educational aids made available to the school do not cover the real needs of disadvantaged children, who make maximum use of book coupons and free transport.

- Pupils who commute are more likely to drop out.

- There is more pupil wastage when teachers express doubts regarding the success at school of less gifted children, or from the lower classes.

- Pupils tend to miss school more frequently and for longer periods when there are fewer and less sustained contacts and communication between teachers and family.

- Pupils tend to miss school more frequently and for longer periods when insufficient use is made of the services provided (psychologist, welfare worker, doctor, etc.) in the school.

C. PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES

School drop-outs feel guilty about failure at school. They feel passive and resigned regarding their situation at school : they are demoralized by failure.

Drop-outs lacking the means to attend private lessons to make up for the lost years are unable to obtain a school-leaving certificate.

Dropping out is closely linked to a pupil's total lack of interest in the subjects taught at school.

D. EMPLOYMENT : TYPOLOGY AND MARKET

The probability of dropping out is higher when pupils have to work during the years of compulsory education (at home or in clandestine employment). School drop-outs have low aspirations as regards work, and are recruited at the bottom end of the scale.

Where there is a conflict between the demands of school and of work (to help the family, wish to earn a living immediately) children opt for work and abandon school.

E. SOCIALIZATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL AND OUTSIDE THE FAMILY

- School drop-outs have hardly any free time for play, to practise motor skills or self-expression.

- School drop-outs barely participate in any form of group activity, whether institutionalised or not.

- Drop-outs make little use of the mass media.
- When they use the mass media, they tend to select the least demanding reading material and programmes requiring no effort of concentration or special knowledge.

F. SOCIAL AND LOCAL SERVICES

-Not only the school but also the social services should seek a solution to the problems of pupil wastage.

-There are no significant links between the activities of the local social services and the problem of wastage.

The CENSIS-IRRSAE Campania study specifically discusses the various types of links between sections A, B, C, D and F. They can be described as follows :

- extraneous
- conflictual
- supportive
- indifferent
- casual
- interdependent.

In Campania the main features of pupil wastage, in declining order of importance, are :

- failure
- repeating years
- slow learning
- irregular attendance
- unaccounted for withdrawal
- official withdrawal.

National withdrawal rate: primary school - 0.7 %
" " " : lower secondary school - 4.5 %.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO FIGHT AGAINSTILLLITERACY

I. TEACHING APPROACHES

Corrective action includes measures designed to bring truants and drop outs back to school. There are several possibilities depending on the geographical area in question, for example :

(a) meetings with parents,
(b) information and awareness meetings with teachers, parents and educational psychologists,
(c) meetings of class and inter-class councils.

These meetings help to identify the root causes of pupils' difficulties. Pupils who play truant or attend erratically are liable to a fine and must be brought before the legal authorities, after intervention by the mayor and the posting of a notice requiring attendance at school on the municipal notice board.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

V. ADULT LITERACY

Given that not all the population had attended compulsory school (at that time only five years at primary level) in the post-war period, a widespread corrective system to meet the needs of illiterate and semi-literate adults was set up under a State law (Law on primary level courses for adults to combat illiteracy).

At its peak, this system offered :

(a) primary level courses A (illiterates), B (semi-literates) and C (updating of primary level education),

(b) musical education (choral and orchestral),

(c) reading centres,

(d) adult education centres for remedial teaching and social skills (CSEP),

(e) television courses,

(f) courses for families and in individual areas,

(g) courses for nomads, prisoners, servicemen, children of construction workers, circus performers, etc.

Law No 382 of 1978 and DPR 616 of the same year abolished the Directorate-General for adult primary level education under the Ministry of Education and, of course, any measures implemented by it.

At one time there were a great many initiatives for adults : updating courses, evening classes, library reading classes, TV courses, courses for those doing military service etc. Then more recently legislation was introduced which gave responsibility for such initiatives to the regions and the communes. One important initiative involves 150 hour courses for workers.

Pending a new law, special courses for workers were set up known as the "150 hours" courses (the reason being that the trade unions had obtained 150 hours paid time off from the employers, which was matched by another 150 hours of unpaid time off).

The courses led to the lower secondary school leaving certificate. They had considerable success although,being the product of collective bargaining, they were for a long time stigmatized and associated with working class culture.

It has recently been found that the "150" hours courses no longer fulfil their original purpose. After being attended by housewives and unemployed workers - to the enormous benefit of all - they are now attended almost exclusively by school-leavers of 16 and overwho have failed secondary school, and see the "150 hours" course as a convenient shortcut to obtaining the lower secondary school certificate in only one year.

In Turin, and then in other cities, it was found that many of the adults enrolled in the "150 hours" courses lacked a working knowledge of the alphabet : they were either completely illiterate or had lost their literacy skills.

The time has come to reinstate, using another approach, primary level courses under the original name of "experimental adult literacy courses" designed to enable adults to successfully attend the "150 hours" courses.

Over time the courses have come to be named simply "adult literacy courses" but they have suffered and continue to suffer from all the limitations of an over-academic approach.

Legislation is awaited on the question of literacy courses, the "150 hours" courses and the requirement to provide continuing adult education for the entire population in a given area which unites the human, financial and structural resources of the State and local authorities.

A new integrated adult education system should, in conjunction with the world outside school, act as a force to motivate and direct all educational activities with continuing education in mind.

Two years ago in Sapri, in the south of Italy, the Fondazione Bernard van Leer, with the cooperation of the Campania IRRSAE, the Campania Region, the Ministry of Education, the Sapri school district and the teachers' professional associations, CIDI and AIMC, held a seminar on the "Alternative school" and the problems of schools in the interior - in particular the Mezzogiorno - with a view to working out a global strategy to counteract the marginalization of small hill or mountain communities and give new life to the school, the local community and the public and social services.

In November 1985, the AIMC will hold a large study meeting in Naples on "School and the Mezzogiorno" to study in-depth the cultural and educational development problems of the South.

ANNEX VIII : LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOLS SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

Legislation concerning statutory schooling is much the same as in the other Member States. Cases of children not attending school are very rare. Those who slip through the net tend to be the children of immigrants who simply are not aware of the statutory obligations. The compulsory school-age is from 6-15 with a preschool year at age 5. High attendance rates are helped by the fact that communities are small and relatively tight-nit. Transporting children to school is a statutory responsibility, and special cases, e.g. the handicapped and the socially disadvantaged, are singled out for special treatment.

B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

Problems of illiteracy tend to arise amongst the imigrant population, notably the Portuguese. Reception classes are set up for young immigrant children arriving in Luxembourg to ease them into their new way of life and special concessions are made to enable them to cope better with their schooling. For example, though both French and German are obligatory languages at school, the Portuguese children are only required to learn one, and to offer their mother tongue as their second language.

However, the most serious problems occur amongst the indigenous population, notably the disadvantaged classes.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

I. TEACHING APPROACHES

One experiment in Luxembourg involves a trainee teacher focussing attention on a single child who is experiencing difficulties at school. The trainee spends a year with that child, following his development, helping when necessary, and, above all, forging special links with him.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

V. ADULT LITERACY

Initiatives aimed at combatting adult illiteracy have been under way for the last three years. Regular courses are organized by special education teachers. The latter operate on a paid basis and are able, because of their status, to guarantee a measure of continuity.

Part of the budget for adult education and evening classes is earmarked for literacy training.

Publicity campaigns, mounted through public initiative have been aimed both at the National Ministry of Education and at educationists, pressing for follow-up work on the grounds that adults require constant motivation. They need a point of reference to maintain contact with them for several years, hence the approach to those who are in a position to guarantee continuity.

For the past three years, literacy courses organized on a regular basis have been available under a scheme intended (though on a scale appropriate to a small country) to provide a more structured and official response to illiteracy and loss of literacy amongst Luxembourg nationals. These courses are staffed by special education teachers paid by the Ministry of Education.

The project leaders (educational guidance officers, teachers and teacher trainers forming a kind of project team) are concerned : to interest and involve national and regional educational administrators and teacher trainers, to encourage the production of studies, to coordinate action, to disseminate and obtain information, and to ascertain the real scale and symptomatic significance of illiteracy and/or its growth.

VI. DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning is not highly developed in Luxembourg.

ANNEX IX : NETHERLANDS

NETHERLANDS

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOLS SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

School attendance is compulsory for children from age 5 until the end of the school year in which the student turns 16. Part-time school attendance is compulsory until the end of the school year in which the student has his 17th birthday. Most children (more than 90 %) begin primary school when they are 4 years old (formerly kindergarten). Primary school is generally attended until the age of twelve : after primary school a choice must be made from among several types of secondary schools.

There is no information available about truancy in primary education. There are several sources with information about secondary education.

The accuracy of the official figures is questionable, however, since absenteeism of this type is not reported to the compulsory education officers by the school principals/directors, despite the fact that they are required to do so. These officers estimate that every day 6 to 11 % of the students in secondary education are unlawfully absent. This type of absenteeism occurs more frequently in certain types of lower vocational education than in general secondary education. The percentage of unlawful absenteeism is remarkably high among Turkish and Moroccan girls ((im)migrant families) : 30 % of these girls never go to secondary school.

When a school does report absenteeism to the compulsory education officer, the officer attempts to end the absenteeism by contacting the

student's family. It seldom happens that a judge imposes a fine.

The number of students leaving secondary school without a certificate is estimated to be 33.000 a year. As part of the educational priority policy (see Chapter 3) special projects have been started in so-called educational priority areas to decrease truancy and improve learning achievement.

B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

On the basis of research the number of so-called functional illiterates is estimated at 100 000 to 400 000 people (total population : 14 million). There is also an important number of illiterates among the (im)migrant workers and their families not included in this figure.

Applying UNESCO estimates for industrialized countries results in 250 000 people for the Netherlands. Efforts are being made to prevent illiteracy through compulsory education adapted to the needs of the highest risk goups : Dutch children from disadvantaged families , children from (im)migrant familie and other children with developmental, learning and behavioural problems. These efforts are based on the Educational Priority Law (introduced by Parliament) and the national educational innovation policy with respect to expanding provision in primary education for students with the problems mentioned.

The regulation "Primary Education for Adults" was drawn up to fight illiteracy among adults. As a result of that regulation courses for adults have been organized in which language, arithmetic and social skills are taught.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

I. TEACHING APPROACHES

In the Netherlands, special measures to prevent functional illiteracy have existed since the early 1970s. They are to a great extent related to the problem of unequal opportunity in education. In the early 1970s unequal opportunity was emphasized with respect to children from disadvantaged families in the mid-1970s children from (im)migrant families had to be added. Educational policy with respect to these risk groups is also directed at preventing functional illiteracy. At first the policies were directed at each separate group but under the Educational Priority Law policies while be integrated. On the basis of this law special arrangements will be made : so-called educational priority areas will be formed in which elementary schools, secondary schools and special education schools will cooperate with all welfare organizations to increase educational opportunities and prevent functional illiteracy. The participation of parents is stressed. In connection with the execution of these measures the school will receive help from the 65 school service organizations in The Netherlands.

In addition to the high risk groups mentioned there are also high risk children from other socioeconomic groups with developmental, learning and behavioural problems. Three of these groups (including the last group) are being dealt with in connection with the innovation policy of the Ministry of Education through the so-called Provision expansion in primary education : early identification of children with these problems and the solution of these problems without placement in special education.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

In this connection two important learning materials development and evaluation projects should be mentioned : the project "Education and Social Environment" (OSM) and the project "Differentiated Education" (Geon).

Teacher training institutes offer courses to all primary school teachers that deal with the expansion of provision using learning materials especially developed for that purpose (with differentiation/individualisation and achievement evaluation possibilities). When introducing these learning materials in their schools the teachers can get assistance from the school service organizations. Reading (education) is the first subject dealt with. In addition the school service organizations may be requested to assist in further evaluation of the students' needs and offer advice regarding remedial activities.

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

The role of preventing loss of skills is generally played by ordinary and mobile libraries, through their efforts aimed to encourage youngsters to read.

The activities regularly undertaken in this field by the community centres are also important.

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

V. ADULT LITERACY

A 4-6 year programme of study 2 1/2 hours per week for 40 weeks a year is organized leading to primary leaving certificate level.

A national resource centre (In Amersfoort) describes documents, research material, programmes, courses etc. concerning adult illiteracy. This centre (S.V.E.) also provides training for teachers, volunteer helpers, etc. Each year an evaluation report is published about the results of the courses for adults.

Plans for action to combat illiteracy are to be laid before Parliament. Specifically, the proposals relate to the organization of adult education courses.

VI. DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning arrangements are regarded as an important means of encouraging illiterates to embark on literacy training courses, but there are reservations as to their suitability as a vehicle for the courses themselves.
Dutch television is, however, in the process of broadcasting a course entitled "Everyday Language" for semi-literates.

ANNEX X : PORTUGAL

PORTUGAL

A. Description of the education system and measures to ensure full time attendance at school.

The education system is organized as follows:

Nursery	Primary	Middle School	Secondary	Higher

Decree law N° 538/79 of 31 December 1979 establishes the legal framework for compulsory education in accordance with the democratic principles incorporated in the Constitutuion of the Portuguese Republic. Basic education is "compulsory, universal and free" and the State is responsible for its provision.

Full time compulsory education covers a period of six years and affects everyone born after January 1967 aged 6 to 14 years.

It is the duty of parents and guardians to register and guarantee the attendance of minor children aged 6 on 30 September of each year; this obligation comes to an end when a child obtains the school-leaving certificate or reaches the age limit.

The certificate is necessary to:

- exercise an activity in public organizations
- be employed in a nationalized or private undertaking
- participate in official sports competitions
- be employed in the management of associations or clubs
- obtain a driving licence.

This certificate concerns every citizen, especially nursery and primary school teachers, whose responsibilities include ensuring attendance.

A number of measures concern the supervision of registration and attendance at school. Employers of minor children, owners of places of entertainmant are liable to penalties if children aged 6 to 14 years are allowed on the premises during school hours.

Recently, a reform of the education system (law 46/86, 14 October 1986) extended the duration of compulsory education to nine years. This law affects pupils presently enrolled in the first year in the 1987/88 academic year.

Illiterary rate of the resident population aged 15 and over, by sex and district, in 1981.

SEX / DISTRICTS	M/W	M	W
AVEIRO	17,2	10,6	23,2
BEJA	38,2	34,4	42,0
BRAGA	20,4	13,4	26,6
BRAGANÇA	30,4	25,0	35,5
CASTELO BRANCO	34,6	26,9	41,6
COIMBRA	22,5	13,6	30,1
EVORA	30,6	26,5	34,3
FARO	28,0	25,8	30,0
GUARDA	29,1	23,6	34,0
LEIRIA	24,9	17,5	31,9
LISBOA	12,0	8,1	15,5
PORTALEGRE	34,7	28,9	40,0
PORTO	14,7	9,3	19,5
SANTAREM	25,6	18,3	32,3
SETUBAL	18,0	13,2	22,5
VIANO DO CASTELO	25,7	15,3	33,7
VILA REAL	28,1	22,4	33,4
VISEU	27,1	19,4	33,8
CONTINENTE	20,3	14,7	25,3

SOURCE: INE, General census of the population and housing, 1981

IN: Situação do Analfabetismo nos Distritos do Continente em 1981, Divisão de Estudos, DGEA

POPULATION AGED 15 AND OVER, BY DISTRICT

1981

DISTRICT	POPULATION ≥ 15 YEARS	POPULATION UNABLE TO READ OR WRITE ≥ 15 YEARS	ILLITERACY RATE OF THE POPULATION ≥ 15 YEARS
AVEIRO	451.078	77.660	17,2
BEJA	148.634	56.823	39,2
BRAGA	481.137	98.017	20,4
BRAGANCA	136.871	41.566	30,4
CASTELO BRANCO	186.309	64.520	34,6
COIMBRA	335.504	75.476	22,5
EVORA	142.666	43.652	30,6
FARO	255.413	71.453	28,0
GUARDA	159.548	46.346	29,1
LEIRIA	316.924	78.993	24,9
LISBOA	1.593.900	191.832	12,0
PORTALEGRE	114.942	39.833	34,7
PORTO	1.122.862	165.236	14,7
SANTAREM	353.997	90.719	25,6
SETUBAL	495.473	89.030	18,0
VIANA DO CASTELO	187.403	48.166	25,7
VILA REAL	188.431	52.906	28,1
VISEU	307.129	83.116	27,1
CONTINENTE	6.978.221	1.415.342	20,3

SOURCE: I.N.E. General census of the population and housing 1981

ILLITERARY RATE BY AGE GROUP AND DISTRICT, IN 1981

AGE GROUP / DISTRICT	15-19	20 - 24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55 - 59	60 +
AVEIRO	1,4	1,6	1,9	2,5	5,3	16,8	22,0	26,8	31,5	47,0
BEJA	2,5	3,3	4,8	8,6	16,9	38,1	45,8	51,3	55,2	69,1
BRAGA	1,4	1,5	2,0	3,0	6,8	23,3	31,1	36,6	41,4	57,7
BRAGANCA	1,9	2,9	4,7	6,1	12,5	27,1	34,2	41,4	48,3	63,1
CASTELO BRANCO	1,5	2,1	3,2	5,2	9,3	25,4	34,7	42,7	50,7	69,3
COIMBRA	1,4	1,6	2,0	3,0	5,7	18,4	24,7	30,6	35,3	51,7
EVORA	1,7	2,1	3,2	5,0	11,1	28,3	36,3	40,5	47,0	59,9
FARO	2,2	2,8	3,3	4,5	7,9	22,1	29,9	35,8	41,4	58,8
GUARDA	2,0	2,6	4,0	5,1	9,4	23,3	28,0	33,9	41,8	58,6
LEIRIA	1,5	1,7	2,3	3,2	6,7	23,1	31,7	37,8	44,3	58,7
LISBOA	1,5	1,8	2,1	2,1	3,7	10,7	14,4	17,3	30,3	31,0
PORTALEGRE	3,0	3,3	3,8	5,4	12,5	30,6	38,5	42,1	46,0	64,2
PORTO	1,9	1,9	2,0	2,4	4,9	16,3	21,5	24,3	28,0	42,0
SANTAREM	1,5	1,7	2,6	3,5	7,1	22,0	28,1	33,2	39,0	56,7
SETUBAL	1,7	2,1	2,6	3,0	5,9	16,5	22,7	28,3	33,9	40,4
VIANO DO CASTELO	1,6	2,1	2,6	4,4	8,3	22,9	29,6	35,0	38,5	56,7
VILA REAL	2,9	3,9	5,7	7,5	12,3	29,0	35,1	42,4	47,1	58,8
VISEU	2,2	2,7	4,1	5,1	9,9	25,1	32,1	35,7	43,3	57,3
MOYENNE NATIONALE	1,7	2,0	2,5	3,1	6,2	18,5	24,6	29,4	34,6	50,0

SOURCE : General census of the population and housing, 1981, I.N.E.

B. The phemonenon of illiteracy

The still high percentage of illiterates in Portugal is due to factors that are endogenous and exogenous to the illiteracy programme. Although certain sections of the population are not motivated to follow courses, transport difficulties in rural areas are a particularly severe hinderance.

The law concerning student workers mainly concerns persons who have attended school but also total illiterates. It should be stressed that young people who have attended compulsory school and have dropped out after several failure constitute a new and growing type of illiterate to be taken into account. Increasing numbers of these young people attend literacy courses to obtain certificate. Some of those who dropped out of middle school were pressured by their parents to find a low paid job. This means that young people are penalized twice, by exercising a generally low skilled and illegal activity.

According to the 1981 census, 25% of the total illiterate population is located in the districts of Porto and Lisbon. The scale of illiteracy in these two areas is due to demographic growth and recent migration.

The illiteracy rate however dropped between 1960 and 1980 in all districts, with certain differences from one area to another, in the more urbanized and industrialized areas the population has increased while illiteracy has declined.

.../...

As regards the illiterary rate by age group, it increases in over 30-34 age group. For those under 34 years the rate is no more than 5%. In the 35-39 age group the rate rises to 6.2% and after that it rises sharply to over 18.5%, 24.6%, 29.4% and 50% in the case of those over 60 years.

Everywhere the illiteracy rate of women is higher than that of men. The age factor has an impact on the illiteracy rate of men and women. Illiteracy is highest among young men and old women.

Overall, it can be said that illiteracy mainly affects the younger and the older age groups in the interior of the country, whereas in urban and industrial areas young men are less and less affected.

.../...

C. Measures to combat illiteracy

I - in education

Once it was understood that the fight against illiteracy should include literacy training actions as well as basic education, the Government developed a two-fold policy, introducing adult education actions on the one hand and reinforcing compulsory education on the other. Further, since failure and dropping out often have their origin in the individual childs general living conditions, the Ministry of Education undertook a policy to expand pre-school education to alleviate such drawbaks.

II - development of language ability objectives

A decline in the ability of a large number of school children to use a linguistic code has caused considerable concern.

To remedy this, in-service training of Portuguese language teachers has been intensified, especially at primary and middle school level. Such training has been given priority. In addition, the programmes must be adapted to the children's environment so that their knowledge and linguistic codes and sub-codes are taken sufficiently into account.

III - loss of skills

All those concerned with primary education have appreciated the need to incorporate in their teaching features of the environment in which the child lives to ensure that the education given is a tool that can be used by the child. Is is designed to adapt the education system to the social, economic and cultural situation.

With this in mind, particularly using informal adult education techniques, support programmes have been worked out: training for librarians and publication of 50.000 copies of a free monthly journa..

IV - Teacher training

Initial training for nursery, primary and middle school teachers is gradually coming under the responsibility of the schools of higher education which also provide in-service training for teachers in their geographical area.

Special importance is placed on teacher training. It is the responsibility of the Directorate-General for Adult Education and is organized either by means of teams which may as necessary operate at a central, or local level, or in cooperation with specialists.

In 1982 assessment of current activities revealed the need to re-think the organization, methods and possibly even the content of training programmes. Thus, teacher-training schemes that were less theoretical and better adapted to needs and more consistent with the goals were formulated and put into practice. With this in mind, less emphasis was placed on teams at central level. The tools for this training included publications selected at central level, such as the quarterly "Forma", a weekly radio programme and texts issued by the documentation centre.

V - adult literacy

1. background

Generalized public education has long been a concern of the public authorities in Portugal. The law of 1835 introducing compulsory education made Portugal a pioneer in the field. It was not until much later after the Second World War under the so-called régime of "Estado Novo" that adult education was given new impetus to meet the need for a more specialized labour force. The literacy campaign of the 1950's and the gradual restrictions on access to certain jobs for the illiterate population tended in this direction.

.../...

However, in the 1960's the worsening of internal contradictions in the régime, the rural exodus, emigration, the worsening of the colonial war drove the question of illiteracy into the background. Thus the primary education network did not include the whole of the population until the end of the 1960's.

From 1970, responsibility for certain literacy activities shifted from the Directorate-General for basic education to the Directorate-General for continuing education (DEGP). Additional primary education courses for adults (CEPSA) were given by primary school teachers.

Political changes in 1974 led to the promotion of cultural activities among populations that were at a social and cultural disadvantage, headed by intellectuals and artists.

In the 1975-76 school year mini-literacy campaigns were organized with the participation of pre-university students, district committees, cooperatives, town halls, and other groups. Adults participated in the formulation fo these literacy programmes.

Outline law 3/79 on the elimination of illiteracy and basic education for adults gives the State responsibility gradually to eliminate illiteracy and promote the access of adults who so wish to various levels of compulsory education. Literacy and basic education are considered from the two-fold point of view of personal achievement for adults and their gradual participation in the social, cultural and political life of the country. Under this law the Government is required to draw up a national plan for literacy and basic education for adults (PNAEBA) which establishes the State's activity in the sector in accordance with social and cultural policies and the development at regional and local level. The law also set up the national council for literacy and basic education for adults (CNAEBA). The pluralist composition of this body should make the population aware of the problem and facilitate diversified participation.

.../...

The PNAEBA and its summary report provide the strategic, educational and institutional framework for an adult education policy in the 1980's.

The PNAEBA was presented to the CNAEBA and was generally approved in 1981, while the specific aspects were approved in 1982. It was put into effect on an experimental basis in 1980. In the first phase seven basic programmes were devised under the following headings:

- integrated regional programmes
- literacy and elementary basic education
- improvement and development of middle school education for adults.

2) Guidelines

With a view to providing general and institutional adult education and training, specially with respect to literacy, the reaction to existing education systems should be to move towards informal education.

Literacy does not simply entail reading words, but calls for understanding and an active response to the environment.

Secondly, literacy should be integrated with the basic education policy. It is important that adult populations in different areas of the country acquire a basic minimum education enabling them, according to their specific functional needs to decipher linguistic signs, and above all to understand and transform their own living conditions.

Beening in mind the diversity of the education situations, the Government must not design interaction and supports according to a pre-established model but must observe and take advantage of the variety and complexity of the basic education systems which have shown that they are richer as regards objectives and methodology. The Government must recognize that these situation are pratical popular education in emoryonic form.

... ...

Since distance (in time and transport) is an obstacle to adult participation in educational activities, the activities must be located in the communities where the adults live and work.

The organizational and educational aspects of adult literacy programmes must take into account the living conditions of the population concerned (time available, priority interests etc.) at the risk of total failure.

With respect to continuing education, the definition of learning areas of basic education for adults is closely linked to the specific situation, to training requirements and the self-teaching capacity.

In this sense, practical knowledge, the adult's experience of the world of work, oral traditions and cultural diversity will be the components used to revitalize education, while integrating them into the programme content, as appropriate to the different levels of learning.

The content of adult education should not be established by administrative decisions excluding participation of the adults themselves (self-training and self-assessment) and rejecting in particular the process of adapting current school programmes for adults.

The acquisition of meaningful and enriching social skills constitutes the training content for adult education although it may not correspond to a structured course.

We are here concerned with the usefulness of education, which should be understood in its broadest sense : educational content and method should be established in the light of economic, social and cultural policy and should be adapted to specific needs. The programmes formulated to assess and give official recognition to levels of education should not be rigid, nor should they be weighted in favour of discoursive forms of knowledge. When establishing the minimum framework for these subjects each case should be based on on-the-spot studies, especially assessment of experiences.

.../...

3. Adult education activities in the framework of the PNAEBA.

3.1. - Since the PNAEBA prefers to organize literacy and adult education in general in institutional frameworks provided by associations in which participants can be involved in the management of activities, they are set up jointly with popular associations; groups, cooperatives, town councils and with firms and other public bodies. Schools dispensing formal education are not used unless other more suitable premises are not available.

As regards social and occupational training, a study is under way to establish a suitable link with literacy courses. However, at middle school level, continuing education courses have been developed (ensino recorrente) in conjunction with firms and public services with which links have been established at the level of specific programmes (general education and vocational training) or at the level of joint responsibility and cofinancing.

Links between literacy courses and adult education in general

As was said with regard to Law 3/79 and the PNAEBA, literacy training is approached form the point of view of personal development of adults and increasing their participation in cultural, social and political life.

The dynamics of social and cultural activities and the development of each community are necessary for the literacy process; with this in mind, encouragement is given to the system of secondment with recruiting teachers.

After specific training, full-time teachers can then develop other non-formal educational activities integrating either literacy training or other types of activities in their continuing education strategy.

Actions integrated into or supplementing literacy training can include the following objectives :

- to sensitize and mobilize participation in literacy training and other types of activities;
- to enrich the literacy training process through the organization of suitable activities with the participation of adults;

.../...

- to increase the educational and cultural development of the population, particularly through participation in reading activities, enhancement of cultural and natural assets; organization with a view to finding a solution for problems effecting the collectivity, creation of theatre groups, marionnettes, music circles, folklore, etc.; restoration of disappearing traditions, organization of various exhibitions, etc.

- to further reinforce the social fabric, increase awareness, contribute to vocational training, create activities and a wide range of practical courses (agricultural machinery, pruning, data processing, accountancy, cookery, crochet work, basketmaking, beekeeping, creativity courses, etc.); to increase support for the setting-up of cooperatives and production associations and the marketing of local products. Such a variety of activities incorporated in of supplementing literacy training should match the adults' needs and interests, and the resources and prospects for local development. Some of the activities are set up with the collaboration of services which at regional and district level are active in a given area of the life of communities or are the source of knowledge of a given subject.

  Town hall cooperation is important and the possibility of assistance from the ESF.

  In principle it is possible for immigrants to have access to all adult education activities. There are specific measures for groups, such as people from the Cape Verde Islands staying in Portugal.

3.2. - Illiteracy training and research: Apart from general education and adult education, there are no centres or institutions in Portugal geared to literacy training and adult education.

Nevertheless, some very interesting studies on this subject are under way, under the responsibility of university professors:

- one seeks to define the social representations of phenomena in the physical world;
- another concerns research on the metalguist abilities of illiterate adults.

.../...

Thus, in the five years of implementing the plan, stress continued to be placed on the social, economic, cultural and educational achievement of activities so that :

- the link between literacy training, adult education and overall development in communities and regions could be established;
- the problems, interests, expectations, motivation and various aspects of the learning and transmission of knowledge, social representation, and, in the case of literacy training, the vocabulary possessed by the adult, could be determined;
- awareness, mobilization, suitability of operation, strategies and contents, and the collaboration of other social and economic sectors could be assured.

With this in mind, preference as regards methodology was given to the research involving participation which facilitates study of the environment and proves to be better adapted to the concepts and objectives of educational research.

3.3. - Methods, techniques and materials used in literacy training

The methods, techniques and materials used are as far as possible the logical consequence of the principles established for non-formal and participative literacy training.

Once the need for literacy training has been identified and awareness established, the methodology calls for the development of the following stages :

a) listing the problems affecting the community;

b) participants' perception of problems identified in the community and definition of their specific problems, interests, expectations, and motivation for learning and the vocabulary they possess;

c) transformation of problems into subjects for consideration;

d) construction of an education/planning system:
   - ordering of the subjects for consideration,
   - selection and phonetical ordering of keywords, in conjunction with the subjects for consideration,
   - interdisciplinary planning of literacy training courses, construction and selection of the relevant teaching materials,
   - continuous assessment and reformulation of the system, in the light of the difficulties encountered by participants and organizers, and the results obtained as regards progress in learning and individual and group development.

.../...

To give effect to the methodological stages calls for individual work on the part of the organizer (literacy instructor) and joint work at the level of the local authorities, between all the organizers at district level, and sometimes at central level.

Teaching material used in literacy training is thus devised and/or selected at local level.

For the time being, no teaching material is produced at central level, except for those listed below, which, without being specificially intended for literacy training, can nevertheless be used for it:

- "Viva Voz" (speaking out loud) - monthly journal in support of basic education. It has made possible the cooperation of a wide variety of participants (50.000 copies a month - free distribution);
- "A viver também se aprende" (living and learning) - a weekly 30-minute radio programme, also used as a support for basic education. The programmes are produced on cassettes and can be used for other purposes;
- "Almanaque" - annual publication. It can be used as a reference work by the instructor;
- Slides, photographs, posters (enhancing awareness) films, etc.

.../...

ACTIONS CONCERNING ILLITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION

YEAR	ILLITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION COURSES		OTHER ACTIONS		
			ONGOING		OCCASIONAL
	NUMBER OF COURSES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF COURSES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1980/81	875	10 389	a)	a)	a)
1981/82	1 747	20 962	-	-	b) 1 607
1982/83	1 845	21 895	309	7 740	4 333
1983/84	1 992	22 705	750	12 999	4 001
1984/85	1 952	22 183	537	11 649	4 051
1985/86	1 697	19 107	610	11 662	4 369
TOTAL	10 108	117 241	2 206	44 050	18 361

SOURCE/ DGEA - DPC

(a) No data

(b) Concerning occasional and on-going actions.

1. Participants

a) by sex

Adults participating in illiteracy programmes and basic education, by sex, as a pourcentage

Sex / Year	M	W
1982/83	44,2	55,8
1983/84	43,9	56,1
1984/85	45,6	54,4
TOTAL	44,5	55,5

TABLE III

- Adults participating in illiteracy and basic education programmes by age group - as a percentage

Age group / Year	14-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+	TOTAL
1982/83 a)	23.5	9.4	6.9	6.5	7.9	11.0	11.8	9.7	7.1	6.1	100
1983/84	23.5	9.8	6.9	6.2	6.9	9.7	12.1	10.1	7.5	7.3	100
1984/85	26.6	9.3	6.9	6.1	5.9	7.6	11.8	10.5	7.7	7.6	100

a) The middle school is included and represents 16 % of the total.

In this context, it may be noted that more women than men attend the basic education courses for adults (CEBA), this being proportional to the illiteracy rate by sex (2.3 % for women and 14.7 % for men). Further, the fact that many women are housewives gives them more liberty to attend courses.
In addition, Table III shows the age groups most interested in CEBA. There are three trends: an increase in demand from 23.5 % to 26.6 % by 14-19 year-olds, stagnation or decline in the 20-49 year age group and a slight increase in the case of the elderly.

VI - Distance learning

There is no systematic utilization of distance learning at primary and secondary level. However, in the case of middle school, corresponding to the 5th and 6th years of schooling, television has been used for several years. These semi-direct education programmes, covering the whole country, have enables thousands of inhabitants in remote regions and middle schools to complete six years of compulsory education.

The sessions are attended by a single teacher who develops the topics and the subject matter presented on television, thus coordinating distance learning with learning on the spot.

With regard to extracurricular education for adults, the radio has been used as a means accessible to the entire population, not only the illiterate population. For some years now, Antenne 1 has been used as national coverage for a programme entitled "Living and learning", broadcast after working hours. At local and regional level, the enormous potential of local radio is also deployed.

For six years a monthly journal has been published as a support for literacy courses and basic education for adults, as well as numerous local and regional journals in which basic education courses are included.

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Academic years	Middle school		
	Direct	T.V.	Total
1	2	3	4
1981-82	301 978	52 525	354 503
1982-83	312 824	61 337	374 161
1983-84	293 862	57 041	355 903
1984-85	302 985	58 089	361 074
1985-86	311 543	55 996	367 539

ANNEX XI : GERMANY

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOLS SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

The Federal Republic of Germany is a Federal State comprising a number of Lander : Baden-Wurtemberg, Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, however Saxony, North Rhine-Westfalia, Rheinland-Palatinate, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein plus Berlin, which enjoys a special status under the Four Power Agreement.

The division of responsibilities for educational policy and planning is dependent on the Federal structure of the State. In this context, responsibility for schools lies with the Länder.

Compulsory schooling starts at age 6 for all children in the Federal Republic. The period of compulsory attendance is generally 12 years, including 9 years (or in some Länder 10 years) full-time and three years part-time. Both preschool provision (kindergartens, infant sections and pre-primacy classes for school-age children not yet ready for ordinary schooling) and primary schools (which take all children from the first through to the fourth, or in Berlin the sixth year of schooling).

Primary school leads on to various types of general secondary school - lower secondary schools ("Hauptschulen") taking pupils from the fifth or seventh to the ninth or tenth year of schooling, intermediate secondary schools ("Realschulen") taking from the fifth or seventh to the tenth year and academic secondary schools ("Gymnasien") taking pupils from the fifth or seventh to the thirteenth year. There are also comprehensive secondary schools ("Gesamtschulen") which cover the period from the fifth or seventh year of schooling to the tenth or thirteenth year. Comprehensive schools are experimental in some Länder, while in others they form part of the ordinary schools system.

Efforts during the fifth and sixth years are directed towards ascertaining which type of secondary schooling would suit the individual pupil. In some Länder these years are organized as a separate observation stage not conditioned by type of school. Where this is the case, secondary schooling proper begins in the seventh year.

Pupils not continuing their education at a general school (intermediate secondary school, academic secondary school, comprehensive school) after the ninth year must attend a vocational school, at least on a part-time basis. This part-time schooling generally lasts for three years in parallel with on-the-job training with an employer. The twelve years' compulsory schooling requirement may also be met by attendance at a general school up to and including the tenth year, followed by two years' attendance at a (vocationally oriented) specialized upper secondary school ("Fachoberschule"). Whereas academic secondary schools qualify pupils for university-level education, specialized upper secondary schools qualify pupils for admission to specialized colleges of higher education ("Fachhochschulen").

Special schools exist for the purpose of educating and training children and young people who cannot, owing to physical or mental disabilities or behavioural problems, receive proper attention at ordinary schools. Except for those schools intended for slow learners and mentally handicapped pupils, special schools follow the same curricula as the ordinary schools, applying teaching methods and principles suited to the particular handicaps with which they have to deal.

Compliance with the statutory school attendance requirements is monitored by school heads and teachers. In special cases (gypsies, children of families living on barges) measures are taken with a view to ensuring the educational success of the children in question (e.g. by the use of tutors). There are only isolated cases of non-compliance with the statutory school attendance requirements and this thus represents no real problem in the Federal Republic as a whole.

B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

To the extent that illiteracy is encountered amongst adults in the Federal Republic, this is generally not the result of a lack of schooling, since compulsory school attendance for all was first introduced in Germany in the 18th century and has been fully enforced for over a hundred years now.

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Functional illiteracy is therefore generally the result of factors such as : failure to benefit fully from school attendance learning proble-s, sight, hearing and speech impairments, illness or a broken home. Functional illiteracy in an adult can generally be traced back to a combination of several factors impeding success in learning and preventing the individual from making use of opportunities to practice reading and writing. The resulting uncertainty and lack of practice can create psychological blocks which result in a loss of the skills learnt at school to such an extent that the residual knowledge is insufficient for the written language demands of everyday life.

The organization of remedial measures is made more difficult by the fact that adult illiterates tend to conceal their reading and writing problems. A further problem lies in the need to produce teaching and learning materials suitable for adults which make due allowance for the differing practical and theoretic language skills of course participants. The question of preparing and selecting teaching materials is closely linked to the methodological and organizational questions which also arise in relation to the conduct of literacy training programmes.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

The teaching of a sound knowledge of reading and writing is one of the fundamental tasks of schools in the Federal Republic of Germany. Teaching in all types of school and for all age groups is based upon mandatory curricula. These curricula include measures for stepping up reading grasp, reading fluency and reading speed, taking into account the pupils' varying learning speeds by means of individualized measures. Scientific teacher training ensures that teachers are enable to teach reading and writing

in primary schools according to recognized principles of educational methodology and to devote particular attention to improving writing and reading skills. The knowledge acquired in basic teacher training is constantly being updated by a wide range of in-service training courses and brought into line with the latest scientific findings.

In a Resolution adopted on 20 April 1978, the Standing Conference of Land Education Ministers laid down the following principles for helping pupils who have especial difficulties in learning to read and write :

"The following principles are intended to help coordinate and improve the measures adopted by the education authorities to help pupils who have especial difficulties in learning to read and write and thus give such pupils greater opportunities for overcoming these difficulties.

I. TEACHING APPROACHES

Mastery of the written language is of special importance for communicatio the acquisition of knowledge and information, access to an occupation, and working life. The teaching of reading and writing is thus one of the primary school's main tasks and it is that school's business to see to it that as few pupils as possible fail to acquire these basic skills.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

To avoid or overcome reading and writing problems , it is necessary to :

- systematically develop those skills and abilities which are the prerequisite for learning to read and write ;
- constantly improve the teaching of reading and writing ;
- give additional help to those pupils who, despite expert teaching, still have difficulty in learning to read and write.

2. Learning to read and write

2.1. Prerequisites

Learning to read and write is a multi-faceted process. The prerequisites include language and speaking abilities, the abilities of optical and acoustic perception and differentation, the ability to grasp speech rhythms, the ability to understand symbols, and manual dexterity. At the same time, such general prerequisites for learning as self-confidence, pleasure in learning, the ability to concentrate, memory, intellectual curiosity, the ability to think, and the ability to communicate and cooperate are also important.

Since children do not start school on an equal footing in terms of background and capabilities, their teachers must take the differences into account. Where children have not acquired the necessary skills and abilities at a pre-school age, these must be developed systematically by the teacher.

2.2. Teaching

A carefully carried out introduction to reading and writing in which the various levels and stages are thoroughly covered is a fundamental way of preventing a failure to acquire reading and writing skills.

At the same time, teaching must be tailored to the pupils' varying backgrounds and capabilities, their individual attitudes towards learning and the speed at which they learn. The teaching of writing should be included in an appropriate manner in the teaching of German and general subjects. At the same time, attempts should be made to determine whether the teaching of writing can draw on a basic vocabulary.

Individualization of teaching is achieved mainly by measures such as differentiation whithin normal class teaching and remedial teaching. The various forms of differentiation are set out in the "Recommendations on work in the Primary School" (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Land Minister for Education in the Federal Republic of Germany of 2 July 1970).

Remedial teaching should be resorted to in the first and second year of schooling, if - despite differentiation whithin normal class teaching - pupils have especial difficulty in learning to read and write, unless it becomes evident that they need to attend special schools. It is recommended that groups be set up for limited periods of time and that their composition should change.

It is to be expected that if pupils are introduced systematically and properly to reading and writing in the first years of primary schooling, there will be fewer pupils requiring special assistance after the second year of schooling.

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Remedial teaching

Remedial teaching has a greater chance of success if the causes of the pupil's difficulties have been diagnosed. Mere determination of the extent of failure, for example by means of standard-oriented tests, is not enough.

Remedial teaching must therefore be based on the teacher's observation of the language, cognitive and social/emotional development of the individual pupil with learning difficulties and his motor and sensory skills.

In individual cases it will be necessary to supplement these observations by specific tests. Where the class teacher or German teacher cannot carry out such tests himself, they should be entrusted, for example, to remedial teachers, teacher/counsellors or special school teachers. Where necessary, the school psychologist and/or school doctor should be brought in. In special cases, the pupil's parents might be recommended to have him examined by an ophthalmologist, an otologist or other specialist.

Under the existing provisions the school makes the decision as to the remedial measures needed by the individual pupil and the nature and extent of such measures. The provisions regarding transfer to another (special) school remain unaffected.

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1.1. General remedial measures

If necessary, differentiation within normal class teaching should be continued in the third and fourth years of schooling.

Remedial measures within the class should be given preference over special remedial measures, because :

- pupils with learning difficulties remain in their accustomed environment ;
- all pupils have an opportunity for mutual aid and social interaction through individual, partner and group work ;
- pupils with learning difficulties are given special exercises linked with the teaching of German ;
- pupils needing remedial teaching are not burdened with extra lessons.

1.2. Special remedial measures

Special remedial measures should be envisaged for pupils who have failed to achieve the targets set for reading and writing in the second year of schooling and for pupils in the third and fourth year whose reading and writing performance over a period of at least three months is assessed as less than adequate. To objectivize performance assessment, informal and standardized tests should be applied if necessary.

Special remedial measures may be applied in groups taken from a single class, several classes, and, in exceptional cases, from several year groups or schools. This can be done in unallocated lessons or in additional remedial classes. Remedial classes should, where possible, be made up of pupils of the same year group. They should, as a rule, include four to eight pupils. The number of remedial lessons should be two to five per week, according to need.

They may be given parallel to the appropriate normal teaching of the class or be given additionally. This additional burden on the individual pupil should not exceed two hours a week. Cooperation between the class teacher, German teacher and remedial teacher is an important prerequisite if remedial measures are to be successful.

Special remedial measures involve reading and writing practice :

- The purpose of reading practice, in conjunction with general language development work, is to reduce reading inhibitions, increase reading fluency, and enable the pupil to read and understand. Interesting reading matter should be chosen, so as to encourage pupils to read of their own accord.

- The purpose of writing practice is to enable the pupil to make up for his shortcomings in this field. The more systematic such practice is, the more successful it will be.

  It includes types of exercises peculiar to this field such as memory training, practising rules, word categorization in terms of content and spelling, practice in the use of dictionaries, derivation of spelling from etymology and categorizing families of related words.

  Differentiation within normal class teaching should be continued in the fifth and sixth years of schooling in respect of pupils who still have difficulties with reading and writing at the end of their primary schooling.

  Where such measures prove inadequate, particularly in the case of major difficulties with writing and spelling, appropriate special remedial measures may be continued.

  It is to be assumed that remedial measures applied in the first to sixth years of schooling will largely eliminate difficulties pupils may have with learning to read and write. Where individual pupils still have such difficulties with writing after the sixth year of schooling, schools should continue to try to deal with them by means of appropriate measures.

2. Performance assessment

Pupils with especial reading and writing problems are subject to the same criteria as other pupils as regards performance assessment.

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2.1. However, the following considerations apply to pupils requiring special remedial measures - if need be up to the sixth year of schooling :

2.1.1. The teacher shall use his judgment in adjusting the performance test to the pupil's current level of performance. To determine learning progress oral and written exercises, class tests and informal procedures are to be used, as well as observations of the pupil's attitude when reading and writing and whether and how he uses aids such as dictionaries and lists of words or other forms of assistance such as partner or group consultations.

2.1.2. Assessment of performance as regards reading and writing is made from an educational viewpoint. This may mean that :

- the performance is assessed only in verbal terms and no use is made of the traditional system of marking ;
- the performance is assessed in terms of marks plus a verbal statement.

2.1.3. These principles apply also to semi-annual and annual reports . If there is no separate entry covering reading and writing in such reports, they should constitute a modest component in the overall mark for German.

2.2. Especial difficulties with writing and spelling alone may not be used a reason for preventing a pupil from transferring to a secondary school, provided his overall performance is otherwise acceptable.

2.3. Leaving certificates are awarded in line with the provisions applying to all pupils.

3. Cooperation with parents

The parents or guardians of pupils with especial reading and writing problems should be informed about these problems, their causes and ways of overcoming them. They should be told about the reading and writing method used, the relevant teaching aids, practice at home, suitable remedial material, motivation incentives and performance requirements.

They should be informed at an early stage of the remedial measures applied by the school and the progress being made. In individual cases, they should be advised about opportunities for a psychological examination of the pupil.

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

Initial and in-service teacher training

One of the tasks of teacher training is to enable teachers to help pupils with reading and writing problems.

This means in respect of theoretical training that every teacher trained to teach in primary schools should be given a thorough grounding in the theory and practice of introducing pupils to reading and writing, taking into account the question of learning difficulties in this area.

In respect of pre-service teaching practice, it means that an introduction to reading and writing in the first and second years of schooling should be a mandatory component of the practical training of primary school teachers. They should also be taught to recognize and help pupils with reading and writing problems.

In-service teacher training should include courses on the theory and practice of introducing pupils to reading and writing and also in recognizing and helping pupils with reading and writing problems.

These recommendations help to make the teaching of reading and writing in the schools of the Federal Republic of Germany more effective. The extent and quality of the teaching of reading and writing in the Federal Republic of Germany are such that all who are subject to compulsory schooling - provided they are educable - are given adequate grounding in these basic skills.

This does not, however, exclude the possibility that - as a result of unfavourable circumstances, lack of practice or mental blocks - forms of functional illiteracy may appear among adults. That is why the Federal and Land authorities provide financial support for the reading and writing courses for persons over compulsory school age which are organized mainly by adult education centres, for the initial and in-service training of the persons conducting such courses, and for the elaboration of teaching methods and curricula.

A survey conducted by the German Federation of Adult Education Centres showed that in March 1984 there were 667 such courses at 223 adult education centres in the Federal Republic of Germany with 4.772 participants. The courses are conducted in small groups, since in this way individual shortcomings can be analyzed and reduced by equally individual curricula. The educational research office of the German Federation of Adult Education Centres is carrying out a pilot experiment financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science and regularly holds meetings on the subject of combatting illiteracy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

V. ADULT LITERACY

Here adult literacy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and provision involves some 600 courses catering for about 5000 functionally illiterate adults. Again the clients are not coming forward : they are either hiding their disabilities or they may not be able to afford the cost of the courses (about DM 30 for a 6-week course).

The Educational Research Office of the National Federation of Adult Education institutes has conducted a project on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Science aimed at the development of teaching and learning materials for adults with literacy problems. These materials are in use in the literacy courses being run by the adult education institutes. A considerable amount has also been done in terms of further training for course leaders, seminars and other information activities in this field. The Federation received a price from UNESCO in1985 for its work on this project.

A second project currently under way is concerned with the scope for increasing awareness of literacy problems and disseminating information on literacy courses via TV programmes. A further federal initiative due to start in 1986 aims at expanding training provision for adults with a view more especially to preventing unemployment among the poorly qualified and improving their employability.

At national level, a large-scale three-year programme of basic courses for adults is now in its final phase. This programme is aimed primarily at very poorly qualified adults and consists of remedial courses incorporating literacy training modules. Since it is difficult to motivate those holding jobs, the programme is targeted at the long-term unemployed and workers facing an immediate threat of unemployment.

Courses are run during the evenings for the benefit of those in employment, and there are also opportunities for them to attend classes on a day-release basis. Some compagnies also run courses on a private basis, aimed at retraining their employees.

VI. DISTANCE LEARNING

Some vocational training is done by the distance method, but again motivation is often lacking. There is a great deal of printed matter on the subject of illiteracy, and it is also covered in radio programmes and television advertising; very often awareness campaigns involve trades unions and churches.

The Federal Government supports activities carried out in this field by the broadcasting companies. Information spots aimed at motivating illiterates and inducing them to attend courses are broadcast during their programmes.

ANNEX XII : UNITED KINGDOM

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUTORY SCHOOLS SYSTEMS AND OF MEASURES WHICH EXIST TO ENSURE ATTENDANCE

Legal responsibility for providing school education and for enforcing regular school attendance rests with local government bodies known as local education authorities en England and Wales, education authorities in Scotland and education and library boards in Northern-Ireland.

Compulsory full-time education begins at the age of 5, and the statutory minimum leaving age for all pupils is 16. Parents may opt out of the state system and have their children educated at a private fee-paying establishment or at home, but such arrangements are still subject to a degree of state inspection. All state schools are legally required to maintain a register in which the presence or absence of every pupil is recorded each day. In a case of prolonged or repeated unexplained absence, an education welfare officer or attendance officer may visit the pupil's home to investigate the circumstance and encourage the resumption of regular full-time education. Parents can be prosecuted for failing to secure the regular attendance of their childs at school ; the penalty is a fine and for subsequent offences a term of imprisonment may be imposed. Alternatively, a child or young person may be brought before a juvenile court in England, Wales and Northern Ireland if he is not receiving suitable education (and, in England and Wales, if he appears to be in need of care and control); the court may make one of a number of disposals available, the most common being to make the child the subject of care or supervision order. In extreme cases the pupil concerned may be taken into residential care. (In Scotland, there are no juvenile courts, but pupils can be referred to a children's hearing which has similar disposals available to it). Although figures may be higher for pupils aged 14 and 15 in some inner city schools, it is thought that between 2 and 4 % of school pupils on average may be absent daily withouth a known good reason.

B. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY

The assessment of children's performance in language is an important focus of the work of the Department of Education and Science's Assessment of Performance Unit (APU). Surveys by the APU between 1979 and 1983 indicated that very few pupils aged 11 and 15 (outside special schools) are unable to decode written language. It was found that no more than 1 % of the pupils in the survey at age 11 were able to respond with less than 10 % success to questions asked about the reading material which they were given, and that there is no evidence for a marked decline in enthusiasm for reading among secondary school pupils.

As far as writing is concerned, at least 95 % of the pupils whose work was analysed by the APU were judged to have obtained sufficient control over the handling of orthographic and grammatical conventions to be able to communicate in writing. That is, they had sufficient control of features such as word division, spelling, capitals and punctuation for their work to be understood on first reading. The School Curriculum Development Committee last year launched a national project aimed at extending the writing skills of children aged 5 to 16 and the APU is continuing its work in monitoring language performance.

Surveys by HM Inspectorate show that schools give high priority to teaching the basic skills of literacy. Children in need of help with developing competency in communication skills receive special support in ordinary classes and often within remedial groups drawn together at regular times throughout the schools week. More schools are successfully enlisting the help of parents in support of reading programmes.

C. MEASURES TAKEN TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

I. TEACHING APPROACHES

Last year the UK Government issued a White Paper entitled "Better Schools" which sets out its plans for improving standards in schools. One of the major objectives is to raise the levels of attainment of all pupils, not least the less able, over a broad range of subjects, including the skills of literacy and numeracy.

The Education Act 1981 placed on local education authorities a duty to identify children in their areas with special educational needs - including learning difficulties - and to make provision for them in ordinary schools where possible.

II. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

The White Paper "Better Schools" indicated the UK Government's support for the view that in the primary phase there should be substantial emphasis on achieving competence in the use of language. In 1984, HM Inspectorate published a discussion paper entitled "English from 5 to 16" which set out views, and sought comments on, the aims and objectives of English teaching and on the related professional issues of the principles of English teaching and the assessment of pupils' progress in language. The paper included discussion of specific objectives for children of primary (as well as of secondary) school age. Consultation on "English from 5 to 16" forms an important part of the process of developing agreed national objectives for English teaching.

III. PREVENTION OF LOSS OF SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) which is a series of pilot projects funded by the UK Governement stimulates the provision of technical and vocational education for 14-18 year olds of all abilities with a framework of general education. It aims to widen and enrich the curriculum in a way that will help young people to develop skills and interests, including creative abilities, which will ensure that they are better prepared for adult and working life.

IV. TEACHER TRAINING

V. ADULT LITERACY

Estimates of illiteracy among the adult population vary. In 1974, it was thought about 2 Million adults (6 %) had literacy problems. In 1981, a

longitudinal survey conducted by the National Children's Bureau found that 10 % of their subjects, then 23 years old, had literacy problems which caused difficulties in everyday life, but this was a subjective and personal assessment. The problem is that there is no agreed standard of literacy against which to measure or quantify illiteracy. There is an initial reluctance on the part of illiterates to come forward and the relative success of efforts in the UK has been the result of an intensive and on-going campai

Just over 10 years ago, adult literacy became an issue of public concern. A "Right to Read" Campaign was inaugurated and in 1974 Government earmarked £ 1 m for adult literacy development. A national agency, the Adult Literacy Resource Agency (ALRA), was set up, to assist local education authorities and voluntary organisations, and a series of television broadcast from October 1975 paved the way for a drive to recruit students. At the same time, a tutor training programme was initiated.

ALRA was succeeded by the Adult Literacy Unit (ALU) and later, in 1980, by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) concerned with literacy, numeracy and related basic communication and coping skills. These changes in title reflect the developing role of the agency. Over the past 10 years, it has moved from the production of teaching materials, tutor training and the promotion of provision in the field to co-ordinating local activities, providing an advisory and consultancy service and undertaking innovative development projects. Throughout this period the Government has continued to finance the agency, and currently reviews its operations in a three-year rolling programme.

Considerable achievements have been made. Ten years ago less than 50 % of local education authorities (LEAs) made any provision for adult literacy. Now all LEAs make provision of some kind. In 1974 only between 5,000 and 10,000 students were receiving help. Now there are over 100,000 students on literacy and numeracy courses in England and Wales. Since 1975 almost 350,000 students in England and Wales, and 80,0000 in Scotland, have come forward.

Since 1980 ALBSU has initiated a considerable number of development projects concerned with :

(a) adult literacy and basic skills work with unemployed adults ;

(b) the development of adult numeracy provision;

(c) the exploration of new styles of provision, including adult literacy in rural areas ;

(d) bridging courses for just basic leteracy students; and

(e) the needs of specific groups and individuals within the Community.

VI. DISTANCE LEARNING

The use of distance and open learning for literacy teaching in the UK is beginning to meet with considerable success, though for some students continuing personal contact with a tutor is essential if they are to learn successfully. Clearly, the level of attainment of students and their motivation is particularly important if distance and open learning methods are to succeed.

ANALPHABETISME / ILLITERACY

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Eurydice

LIST OF OFFICIAL AUTHORITIES ACTIVE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY IN EDUCATION

Document prepared with the technical assistance of EURYDICE, the Education Information Network in the European Community, mainly on the basis of replies provided by the National Units to the question put to the Network in May 1985.

1. Dutch-speaking Belgium

- Het Bestuur voor Volksontwikkeling bij het Ministerie van Nederlandstalige Cultuur
  . Budget : BFR 5 x 366 x 200

- Het Ministerie van Tewerkstelling en Arbeid
  . Indirect subsidies

- Het Ministerie van Landsverdediging

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2. Federal Republic of Germany

- Bundesministerium für Bildung un Wissenschaft
- Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder des Bundesrepublik Deutschland

- There is no special budget for literacy. However the Bund has already foreseen in its budget only for the years 1982-1985 round 3 M. DM in the sector of primary teaching. On this basis many projects for drop outs or during with special themes are set up and, into these projects, special programs for reading and writing are implemented. The Länder and the local authorities support financially the training of teachers and the promotion of elementary school.

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3. France

- Ministère de l'Education nationale
- Ministère de la Culture
- Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Solidarité nationale (Fonds d'Action sociale)

- No special budget for action to combat illiteracy in schools. The following should, however, be mentioned :

  . FF 500 million for the "60 000 young people" programme
  . FF 37 million for educational activities projects
  . FF 2 million for the development of BCIs and CDIs

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4. Greece

- The Central Committee for Adult Education (KELE) which comes under the Ministry of Education

- The Prefectural Adult Education Committees (NELE) which come under the Secretariat-General for Adult Education (GGLE) at the Ministry of Education

- No information available regarding costs

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5. Ireland

- The Vocational Education Committee : the Adult Education Board
- Special budget set aside for this purpose

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6. Italy

- Ministry of Education
- Regional Schools Directorates
- Communes
- Heads of primary and lowever secondary schools

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7. Luxembourg

- Groupe "ICA" (Instruction complémentaire à de jeunes adultes analphabètes) au service de Psychologie de l'Institut supérieur d'Etudes et de Recherches pédagogiques
- Draft budget

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8. Netherlands

- The Ministry of Education
- The Ministry of Social Affairs
- The Ministry of Welfare Health and Cultural Affairs
- The National Centre for Adult Education : National Service Office in Amersfoort : SVE
- Budget : ± 7.7 million HF1

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9. United Kingdom (except Scotland)

- Local Education Authorities in England and Wales
- Budget : £ 1.8 m

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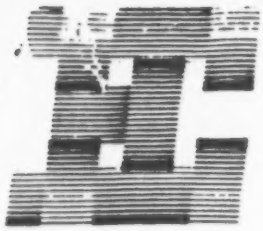
10. Scotland

- The Scottish Community Education Council : the Scottish Adult Basic Education (SABEU)
- Budget : £ 453 000



Eurydice

ANNEX XV

EURYDICE EUROPEAN UNIT
Rue Archimède, 17 Bte 17

B - 1040 BRUSSELS

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TEACHER EDUCATION / TRAINING / TRAINER
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THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

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VOLUNTARY WORK / INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

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COMMISSION
OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS
AND EDUCATION

V/C/2/

ANNEX XVI

"THE PATHS OF ILLITERACY"

Research coordinated by Lire et Ecrire for the
Working Party on Illiteracy of the EEC
with the collaboration of literacy organizations in Flanders,
the Federal Republic of Germany, France,
the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

"LIRE ET ECRIRE"

Brussels
5 September 1985

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Telex: COMEU B 21877 - Telegraphic address: COMEUR Brussels

I. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research project on the paths of illiteracy was to gain an understanding of how individulas reach adulthood illiterate in the context of a system of compulsory schooling. The first taks was to select a sample from amongst people learning to be literate via adult literacy networks. The next stage was to conduct a survey aimed at measuring the sample's level of illiteracy and collect information on respondents' schooling, family background and health. (This survey was to be carried out in Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom).

The third stage entailed analysing the data collected with a view to identifying the main features - the constants.

Finally, these findings were to be used as a basis for proposing ways and means of preventing illiteracy at school in terms of both educational and social measures.

II. SAMPLE

The survey covered total and partial illiterates (and ex-illiterates) lacking a functional grasp of reading and/or writing . The target population was thus adult, comprising individuals who were in principle at least 16 years old and had been subject to compulsory schooling in a country belonging to or shortly to join the EEC.

"Lire et Ecrire" gathered its date from adult literacy networks in the various countries involved in the study (Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and the sample was made up of people learning to be literate with whom these networks were in contact.

The data collection process fell into two parts : a large-scale quantitative survey and a smaller scale qualitative survey.

- Quantitative data were gathered from a questionnaire administered to 359 subjects in French-speaking Belgium, 113 in Dutch-speaking Belgium, 94 in the Federal Republic of Germany, 64 in France. 101 in the Netherlands and 74 in the United Kingdom.
- Qualitative data collection took place firstly vis-à-vis the whole sample - in the shape of three open-ended questions in the questionnaire which related to feelings of rejection at school, falling behind at school and matters not raised in the questionnaire, and partly in greater depth via semi-directive interviews with a smaller sample using collective recall techniques.

III. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In order to test the starting hypotheses, two types of survey were combined : a quantitative survey and a qualitative survey.The first part of the study analyses the quantitative data, whilst the second is devoted to the qualitative data. The qualitative analysis of the questionnaire sent to all participants is founded in particular on the qualitative interviews concernin "falling behind at school" as a starting point for analysis and feelings of rejection as an element in the mechanism of discrimination at school. After analysing the data collected and highlighting the factors and mechanisms involved in the process of becoming illiterate, the study proceeds to put forward proposals for preventive action at school (i.e. taken in and/or by schools) in both the educational and the social fields. These proposals constitute the third part of the study.

CONCLUSIONS

Through analysis of the collective recall interviews, the authors endeavour to identify the mechanisms producing illiteracy as a result of interaction between the child with his/her particular social and cultural background and the school with its differing social and cultural framework.

Starting from the visible side of illiteracy - failure at school - the authors proceed to analyse the schools system, which discriminates against pupils with learning difficulties (sending to the back of the class, derision, punishments, etc.) and legitimizes this discrimination by throwing the blame onto the child.

This discrimination also occurs in relations between the pupils and is overlaid by social discrimination against children whose appearances and attitudes do not correspond to the expected social norm. The authors also endeavour to analyse the transmission of values and behaviour patterns (in a word : culture) from parents to children :

- the parents transmit their own pattern of living in which everything is organized around work;
- the children's free time is spent - as is their parents' - in collective activities and leisure, where the fact of being together is more important than the actual activities (which are, in general, non-intellectual) ;
- the children inherit (in the cultural sense) their parents' relationship to knowledge and power - a relationship of subordination.

On the basis of this analysis, the authors formulate the following hypothesis : that the values and rules of the school (individual competition repression of movement and self-expression, primacy of intellectual activities over manual activities) are in conflict with family values and behaviour patterns (primacy of manual work, poorly developed intellectual activities, group leisure activitie Working class children thus face two sets of values. This means that their integration in the school system will determine (or be determined by) their choic of one cultural system or the other (or a measure of success in reconciling the two).

Children reject the school culture by developing writing evasion strategies (cheating, indifference, misbehaving, etc.) and endeavouring to assert themselves in other ways (manual activities, fighting, etc..).

Blocks to learning are thus built up, and this is what the authors call the construction of the "illiterate personality" : in order to resolve the conflict between his/her ideal self-image and the image imposed by others on the basis of illiteracy, the illiterate individual retreats within himself/within the circle of those in a similar situation or expresses this conflict in the shape of aggressive behaviour, thereby reinforcing and legitimizing the school's discri minatory attitude.

V. HOW TO PREVENT ILLITERACY AT SCHOOL

Following on this in-dept analysis, the authors put forward a series of proposals regarding action to be taken in the context of schools.

They start out from the principle that championing action to combat illiteracy amounts to taking a stand for a democratic education system. This democratic conception of education has implications as far as methods of teaching are concerned, since reading must be seen in this context as a tool for expressing and communicating real things. With this in mind, the study proposes a method of learning bases on the communication function of writing and the recognition of familiar elements in the written text (anticipation and checking of meaning). This method would appear to give a concrete meaning and value to the written word, thereby encouraging the child to take as hiw own the knowledge and power which it can give.

The method proposed is, however, a tool and cannot by itself guarantee success for all.

Special attention should be given to children with learning difficulties i.e. there should be what the authors call "positive discrimination". The latter is dependent on the teacher's attitude - the attention he gives specifically to those pupils with the greatest difficulties, who are all too liable to fall behind. One useful tool in this connection is assessment, seen not as a means of stigmatizing difficulties or channelling weaker pupils into lower-status streams but rather as an instrument for evaluating the pupil's progress on an on-going basis and in terms of skills acquired instead of subjects covered.

Having thus defined method and attitude, the next step is to define content. In the face of the cultural divide between the child's environment and the school, the content of teaching should be based on the child's experience, starting from what he knows so as to structure learning experiences both open to and facilitating mastery of the surrounding world within the framework of his everyday reality and relationships.

In this context, nursery schools would appear to have a role in preparing the ground for the learning of reading (familiarizing pupils with the written word an developing an awareness of its function and helping the child to learn about himself, his abilities and the surrounding world.

Given the important part played by parents in successful schooling, and the power lessness and ignorance of working class parents vis-à-vis the school, the authors seek ways of creating an educational community which would involve such parents actively in their child's education. This, they argue, will only be possible if relations between parents and schools are deschcolarized to the maximum by opening up schools to the experience of the children in their home and social environment, by facilitating access (the school going out to meet parents), by providing opportunities for parent education in a broader school context and by involving parents in the activities of the school.

Finally, the authors comment on two particular target groups : migrant children and gypsy children, both groups requiring the provision by schools of structures and curriculum content adapted to their outside lives.

ANNEX XVII : CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF 4 JUNE 1984

CONCLUSIONS
OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

OF 4 JUNE 1984

I. TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT
II. THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
III. PILOT SCHEMES RELATING TO THE EDUCATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS' CHILDREN
IV. THE INTEGRATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN INTO ORDINARY SCHOOLS
V. MEASURES TO COMBAT ILLITERACY

V. MEASURES TO COMBAT ILLITERACY

Illiteracy has become a problem of greater or lesser proportions in all the Member States. Initial or basic illiteracy remains a source of concern, but in addition recurrent or functional illiteracy has developed, arising to a certain extent from a decline in the traditional practice of reading and being exacerbated by the importance of new forms of written information in modern life. It concerns certain groups of the population who are confronted with particular situations, making it very difficult for them to integrate into working life and into society in general. This social factor is the result of a combination of economic, educational and social phenomena and therefore involves all authorities in the Member States of the Community. However, education authorities are particularly involved in preventing illiteracy and conducting the campaign against it, through education and further training.

The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council,

Bearing in mind their resolution of 9 February 1976[1] comprising an action programme in the field of education, and in particular the part concerning the achievement of equality of opportunity with a view to free access to all forms of education;

Bearing in mind the importance which the Europan Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and both sides of industry rightly attach to this phenomenon of illiteracy;

With a view to giving people affected by this phenomenon a better grasp of techniques relating to personal and social life, and in order to prepare them better for the world of work,

Consider that illiteracy should be given special attention by the Member States and the Community, so that the whole population may gain a better mastery of the basic instruments of reading and writing. They point out that writing in all its forms, including the most recent, is and will remain an essential means of communication, providing access to information, training and participation in the world of work.

They therefore agree to the following conclusions.

A. The competent authorities should take such further measures as are necessary within their respective education systems to ensure that the problems of illiteracy are given full attention in all educational and training programmes, including:

   1. adapting teaching so that the individual difficulties of the most disadvantaged pupils can be taken into account and overcome;

   2. reviewing and developing as necessary aims and objectives for language competencies (reading, writing and communication skills) in primary schools;

   3. trying to develop educational and reading practices designed to prevent the loss of skills which have been acquired by, for example, making available to young people resources such as fixed and mobile lending libraries;

[1] *OJ C 38, 19.2.1976.*

4. reviewing the initial and in-service training of teachers to prepare them for teaching a wide range of pupils, with diverse abilities and social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds;

5. promoting adult literacy campaigns (where this sector is a responsibility of the national ministry of education) and in any case following these campaigns closely, with a view to making a better analysis of the origins of illiteracy and thus being better placed to take preventive measures;

6. developing distance learning activities, particularly through collaboration with television networks wherever feasible.

B. With a view to supporting the measures taken by the Member States, and within the limits of its financial means, the Commission is charged with:

(a) organizing exchanges of information among national experts on:

— the causes and the scope of the phenomenon;
— the results of experiments in the national educational systems;
— the measures needed in primary schools to improve the development of competence in all language modes;
— other practices for combating illiteracy;

(b) taking account, in the application of the resolution of 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education, of the phenomenon of illiteracy, within existing and future Community educational projects, particularly:

— the introduction of new information technologies in education;[1]
— the programme of pilot projects to facilitate young people's transition to adult and working life.[2]

1. The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council ask the authorities involved in implementing Community measures on vocational training and employment based on use of the European Social Fund[3] to take account of the particular requirements of people affected by illiteracy.

2. They ask the Education Committee to make a progress report by the end of 1985 on the implementation of the policy to combat illiteracy in the European Community.

These conclusions will be sent to the European Parliament and to the Economic and Social Committee.

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[1] *OJ C 256, 24.9.1983.*
[2] *OJ C 193, 28.7.1982.*
[3] *Council Regulation of 17.10.1983 on the implementation of Decision 83/516/EEC concerning the tasks of the European Social Fund: OJ L 289, 22.10.1983.*